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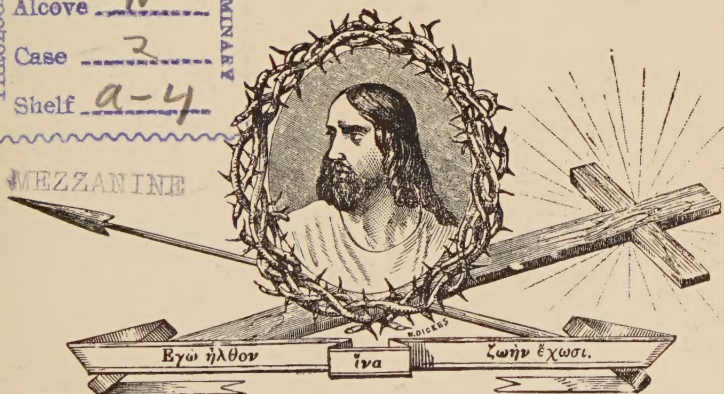
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The
Leading Homily.

DUTY AND TRUTH.

"IF ANY MAN WILLETH TO DO HIS WILL, HE SHALL KNOW OF THE TEACHING."—*John vii. 17.*

DUTY and Truth; of these and of their relation to each other our text tells. Of what themes of more momentous practical interest did these same lips of Jesus ever speak?

All the revelation His Gospel makes to men is supremely concerned with human Duty and divine Truth. And is not this man's duty, namely, the willing to do God's will? And is not this divine Truth, namely, the teaching that is of God, in the sense of being about God and from God?

We said, too, that these words of our Lord suggest the relation of Truth and Duty to each other. The connection here indicated is not as we often conceive it when we lay more stress on Theology than on Religion, a conception of the relationship of Truth and Duty that leads us to say, "if we knew more we would do better." No; that is an inversion of Christ's order, which is, if you did better you would know more. Do what you already know to be right; however ordinary and commonplace the deed is, do it, and by doing it you will arrive at higher and deeper knowledge. Duty is the key to Truth.

I.—TRUTH: the knowledge of it is of vast importance.

This is implied here. The Jews were marvelling at the doctrine of Jesus; and He does not at all disparage their estimate of the worth of wisdom. The greater than Solomon would have crowned wisdom with as much enthusiasm as did Solomon himself. The consciousness of its worth is the conviction of all the best souls, and lies at the bottom of the restlessness of multitudes who scarcely know why they are so unquiet. In differing tones Humanity pours forth upon the air of all the lands and all the ages the cries, "Where shall Wisdom be found?" "What is Truth?" Sometimes the question is a cavil, it lightly trips over the lips of scorn. It is, as, perhaps, it was in Pilate's mouth, a hiss. Gold, pleasure, applause, who can appraise their worth; but what is Truth? But slowly and agonisingly the cry breaks over earnest lips, "What is Truth?" In perplexity, and from the midst of oft-baffled enquiries in these days of stern intellectual conflicts, and troops of claimants of authoritative teaching, men are heard crying, "Oh, to be away from falsehood; oh, to be above uncertainty and doubt." So much that has been counted sacred for ages is rudely questioned, so many social theories are being challenged, so many traditions are being resolved into legends; there is on every hand such shifting and silting that, perhaps, never did the appeal mean so much as it does now, "Where shall wisdom be found, and where is the place of understanding?" No one can listen to Christ's teaching without realising that He has fullest sympathy with this human quest for Truth. In the conversation from which our text is taken, our Lord implies that the knowledge of Truth now and here is an unspeakable satisfaction to man. The eye does not thirst for beauty, or the ear hunger for music, or scarcely even the heart ache for love more constantly and universally than does the intellect yearn for Truth.

The "teaching" that Christ says is God's is actual, changeless, absolute truth. Oh, to know it! It shall be to us as the pole-star in the night of life, as an anchor in the storms of time. Thrice blessed is the man who in any domain of enquiry for Truth, and most of all in the highest domain, can utter a thank-

ful and satisfied, if surprised, *Eureka*. Christ says about the sort of man He describes, that this shall be his happy experience, "he shall know." He does not fix the period of the attainment of this knowledge. It may be slowly and gradually reached, as by the processes of prolonged research that end in discovery; or it may be realised with unexpected suddenness, as by some strangely vouchsafed revelation. More often the former than the latter, doubtless. But the latter as well as the former. It may be now and here, or it may be yonder and hereafter, or it may be both. But the lips of the Infallible Teacher have distinctly assured us that there are those whose desire for knowledge will be fulfilled, that the true passion for Truth will be satisfied. This leads us to the enquiry as to who will acquire this knowledge, and what is the method by which they will attain it. Thus we notice—

II.—DUTY: the endeavour to do it is the surest way to a knowledge of the Truth.

(1) God's will is the standard of Duty. "His will," so Christ speaks of God's requirements. Unlike the laws of nations, or the maxims of society, or the usages of trades and professions, it is fixed, unalterable. It is the same in all lands and centuries, and indeed in all worlds. Heaven has no code that contradicts the code by which God governs earth; nor can hell have any other. Righteousness, Truthfulness, Love, these are the glory of the Sovereign and ideals for His subjects in all the zones of the universe. Jesus spoke of it to His disciples as "the will of your Father," and taught us alike in the prayers of life and of tongue to seek that our Father's will should be done on earth as it is done in heaven. Then, and only then, is duty done.

(2) The willing to do God's will is our duty. "If any man *willeth* to do His will." Canon Westcott calls our attention to this "*willeth*" as to the emphatic word here. Some may do God's will without any strong, steadfast exercise of their volition. Their temperament, or the influences about them may drift them into a course of life that is outwardly an observance of the Divine Law. But it is not of such that our Lord is speaking here. It is rather of such as with eagerness enquire what God's will is, and

then with pertinacity and courage, struggle and endeavour to perform it, and to perform it not merely with the organs and senses of the body, but in every recess and activity of the soul. The willing to do God's will must involve with the followers of Christ what it involved in His own Gethsemane experience, when recovering from the cry of alarm and revulsion that His agony, personal and sympathetic, had wrung from Him, He amends His prayer, perfects His supplication in the sacredest sentence any lips can ever utter, "Nevertheless, not as I will but as Thou wilt." While this conception of duty necessitates such a demand on the will—not merely on the passing wish, but the deepest, abiding, controlling volitions of the soul,—it has also a comforting aspect. For it describes duty not so much as an outward achievement as we sometimes picture it:

"'Tis not what a man does,
But what he strives with earnestness to do
That honours him: the striving is the glory,
Not the wreath of fading bay that rings the victor's brow."

(3) The willing to do God's will is the way to the knowledge of the Truth. "He that willeth to do His will shall know of the teaching." Sometimes we say "there is no royal road to learning," but remembering James' apostolic declaration, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," we rather conclude in the light of Christ's teaching now before us, that the only way to learning is the royal way.

Probably we shall easily agree that Saint Paul attained a knowledge of Truth immeasurably beyond that which most men reach. His sermon on Mars-hill, his argument with the Corinthians for the resurrection, indeed the whole sweep of his great intellect over the wide domain of Christian truth often makes us feel that we are almost as far beneath him as he felt he was far beneath The Christ. What was the beginning of this great apostolic understanding of truth? What its initial stage? Can we find him in the porch of this vast temple which he so searchingly and so successfully explored? We can. Here is the beginning, here the initial stage, here he is in the porch; "Lord,

what wilt Thou have me to *do*?" That desire is the grand inlet to the light which filled and flooded his great nature. So Paul found Christ's words true.

This principle our Lord says is of universal application. "If *any man* willeth to do His will." These words are far reaching, indeed, limitless in their bearing. Glancing first like a ray of dawn on the early disciples, their full morning light encompassed the apostle Paul, and their noon-day splendour bathes us in the inspirations of its comfort and hope. To the orthodox and to the heretic, to the little child and to the cultured sage, to the happy believer and to the honest sceptic, to the loyal Christian in the church and to the bewildered, perplexed, baffled enquirer in the world the assurance is borne, that where there is the genuine willing to do God's will there shall come the unveiling of the face of Truth and the unfolding of the great mysteries of destiny. The "shalls" of Christ are not the "perhapses" and the "may bes" of human guessers after Fact; they are the irrevocable predictions of Him who spake as man never spake, for whom God challenges our attentive and believing heed with the words, "This is My beloved Son; hear Him." And He says, without peradventure, or any other condition than that of genuine obedience, "If any man willeth to do His will, he *shall* know of the teaching."

(4) This is explained by the fact that intuition comes by sympathy, and discovery by experiment. The vision of God is vouchsafed to the pure in heart. It was the apostle of love whose eye quickly discerned the Master when the others were in doubt as to who He was. The lips of him who loved most were the lips that could soonest and most certainly say, "It is the Lord." So is it with all truth as it is with God and with The Christ. And such a willing to do God's will as we have been considering implies sympathy, implies fellowship, implies affinity. Such deep, constant internal volition is at once a result and a sign of a sympathy which apprehends what it loves. Love, not logic, is the safe guide into the arcana of truth about God, for "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him." Such willing to do God's will as Christ here enjoins is a sure and lofty token

of love. For if we love we keep the commandments of the loved one. Moreover, there is in practical obedience to God's will the discovery that comes by experiment. The child learns to walk by walking; and not less surely the obedient learns the ways of God by following them step by step as far as he sees them. Thus each step prepares the way for the next and the next, as the goals of yesterday become the starting posts of to-day. "Then shall ye know, if ye follow on to know the Lord." "Thy word is tried, therefore I love it." This is the experience not of such as simply "try" any Divine teaching in the crucible of exegesis or of theologic study, but as "try" it by putting it to the test in the joys and sorrows, the trials and temptations and duties of our daily life. So with the "word" about Prayer, about Work, about Love. Each one becomes what Peter found Christ Himself was—a tried and precious stone in the habitation of the soul. Do the duty that lies nearest to thee, so thou shalt see all that needs to be seen now, and shalt in the right time see all that can be seen by the eye of man when no longer mortal, "he shall know even as he is known." Do such duty immediately, unreservedly. For every such duty shall be to thee as the rung of a ladder, as sacred and more lasting than Jacob saw.

EDITOR.

CHRIST, NOT SYSTEMS; TRUE CHRISTIANITY.—"As our interpretations of the Bible are not necessarily the Bible, so no Christian system is Christ, and some systems called by His name have no connection at all with Him. But then men do not make these distinctions, and discrimination is not easy. Here is Christianity like the old tower on the plain of Shinar. A stranger draws near to see what the children of men are building. He inquires. He is answered by a confusion of sounds and incongruous voices. Each voice may have some tone of Paradise; each dialect may have numerous signs and sounds of Eden; but the effect of the whole upon the ear of the stranger is this one impression—Babel. Do not let men hear so much about *my* views (for of what consequence are they?), *our* principles, *our* church, *our* denomination, *our* fathers, *our* forefathers, *our* traditions, *our* theology; for amid these sounds of 'I' and 'me,' 'he' and 'him,' 'they' and 'them,' 'me' and 'us,' 'theirs' and 'ours,' men lose the name which is above every name, the name of Jesus Christ the Lord,—the only name by which a sinner can be saved,—the one name by which order is to be brought into the midst of confusion, light into darkness, harmony into discord, life into death, and salvation to a ruined world."—SAMUEL MARTIN.

Germ of Thought.

The Gospel of Christ and the Brotherhood of Men.

“THAT THE GENTILES ARE FELLOW-HEIRS, AND FELLOW-MEMBERS OF THE SAME BODY, AND FELLOW-PARTAKERS OF THE PROMISE IN CHRIST JESUS THROUGH THE GOSPEL.”—*Ephesians* iii. 6.

It is the genius of the Gospel that it unites all its believers in one common brotherhood. Its grand truths depend on no argument, on no talent. They are their own power; influencing the souls of men by their own inherent virtue. The Gospel of the love of God in Christ Jesus is no mere adaptation; it is an absolute necessity for the life of the soul of man. As the rain is to the earth, so is the Gospel to humanity. The Gospel is Christ, and Christ is the Light of the world. His “star” appeared in the east; men saw it and wondered; for its radiance far outshone the constellated hosts. A glorious emblem of Him who is creation’s Lord—the Divine Man—who is the Head of all things unto His Church. Those ancient sages, the first-fruits of the Gentiles, came to Bethlehem with their offerings; they bowed and worshipped Him who was “born King.” “Born King,” “that in all things He might have the pre-eminence; for it pleased the Father that in Him should all the fulness dwell. And through Him to reconcile all things unto Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, whether things upon the earth, or things in the heavens” (Col. i. 20). Here are conquests such as earth’s mightiest warriors never won. These are triumphs of the power of Christ Jesus “through the Gospel.” “The fulness of times” revealed the fulness of the Father’s love, “that He might gather together in one all things in Christ.” The Jew and the Gentile, the bond and the free, were now to be one in Christ. Creedal animosities

were to pass away, and sects and parties were to become united in one common brotherhood. Henceforth their voices were to mingle in one glorious harmony in singing the song of redeeming love. For Jew and Gentile there was now to be—

I.—FELLOW-HEIRSHIP. Those who were once afar off were now to be brought near.

1. *By title.* Christ Himself is the title-deed. The Jews were heirs by being the seed of Abraham; but the Gentiles were now made heirs by the gift of His only begotten Son. "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Rom. viii. 32.) Shall the petty jealousies of sectarianism, and the grovelling pleasures, and the cankering covetousness of the world engross our every thought and care, when such an "unspeakable gift" is offered us? Shall we prefer the base and sordid things of the passing hour, to that which is noble, that which is pure, and that which is eternal?

Titles to earthly possessions may be disputed and proved invalid; but Jesus Christ is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." History tells of a monarch who had assembled his nobles before him and demanded by what right and title they held their lands and properties. Instantly a hundred swords were snatched from their sheaths and glimmered in the air; and with one voice the nobles answered, "By these we won them, and by these we will hold them." But we Gentiles have a far higher, holier, and more enduring title, if we have "Christ in us the hope of glory." Eternal ages shall never invalidate this title, for it is the immutable gift of the eternal God Himself. This fellow-heirship is not only by title but—

2. *By possession.* "The promise in Christ, through the Gospel," is the immutable Word of God. It includes both time and eternity; "the life which now is, and that which is to come." Christ is the Father's "unspeakable gift"; "in whom, having believed, we are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is an earnest of our inheritance, unto the redemption of God's own possession, unto the praise of His glory" (Eph. i. 14). If we have the indwelling

of the Spirit, we have "the earnest of our inheritance" already. The full possession, the full glory shall be ours hereafter. Is Christ ours,—our trust, our hope, our joy? Then in Him we have "all things." Strange expression—"all things." Our feeble, finite minds fail to comprehend "the unsearchable riches of Christ"; or "what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints"; and we are lost in amazement as we contemplate that "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

"The glory of that day will be,
The soul's complete epiphany."

In that day, when the glory of Christ shall be revealed, sects and nationalities shall have passed away, for in Christ "there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all and in all." Again, for the Jew and the Gentile there was to be—

II.—FELLOW-MEMBERSHIP. The one faith was to be proclaimed for all nations; the one Saviour for all mankind. Christ is the grand centre towards which all men are to be drawn. He who is "the Light of the world" is the great central Sun of the universe. He who is Peter's "Christ," and Thomas's "Lord and God," is the Head of the universal Church. "Whosoever," among all the nations of the earth, receiveth Christ in faith and love is made a member of His glorious Church. As the mighty ocean, stretching from shore to shore, so is the Church of Christ. Christ is the ruling Head of the body and all His subjects are "members one of another."

1. *By relation.* As the hand and the foot are members of the one human body, so are the Jew and the Gentile members of the one spiritual body—the Church. The relationship is most tender, most sympathetic, most vital; "if one member suffers all the members suffer with it." A life-giving energy flows from the heart of Christ, transfusing its vitality into every member of His body. "Because He lives we live also." Each member is concerned in the well-being of the whole, for there is a conscious mutual sympathy and affection indwelling each and pervading

all. Oh, for another Pentecostal outpouring, a mighty baptism of love, that even now, in this our day, the world may again exclaim, "Behold how these Christians love one another!" "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another" (St. John xiii. 35). The fellow-membership of Christians is not only by relation but also—

2. *By character.* The prayer of our Lord for the apostles, and for all who should believe on Him through their word, was, "that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us" (St. John xvii. 21). Christian assemblies, believers in Jesus, behold here the glorious model of your union and membership in Christ! Oh, that Christians would strive to realize more and more the preciousness of this divine privilege.

The true Christian's character is *one* everywhere; it is the character of Christ. We have one written word, we are taught by one Spirit, we drink at one fountain of love, we adore one God, and we seek one eternal home. Truly we "know" now only in part, yet hereafter we shall no longer "see through a glass darkly, but then face to face, and know even as also we are known" (1 Cor. xiii. 12). As God hateth sin so the Christly soul abhorreth that which is evil,—every evil, every false and wicked way. As God delights in holiness, so does the Christian delight in that which is pure and lovely and of good report.

It was the joy of Christ to do the will of Him that sent Him. His whole life was one unbroken harmony with His Father; as much in Gethsemane and on Calvary as on the mount of Transfiguration. "I do always those things which please Him." And are not Christians called to "obedience of the faith among all nations" (Rom. i. 5); "that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love" (Eph. i. 4)? But the Jews and the Gentiles were to be united in—

III.—FELLOW-COMMUNION. Ancient philosophers had dreamed of the Brotherhood of man as a remnant of a golden age long passed away. They cherished its memory, but knew not how to restore it again, or what should be the bond of union and common

sympathy among men. They were groping in darkness, seeking for one who should unite the Divine and the human, and draw to Himself the aspirations of all aspiring souls. Governments, philosophies, and all human agencies have failed to unite mankind in one common bond of Brotherhood. It was an honour reserved for Him who is the glorious Head of the universal Church. "I," said He, "if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me" (St. John xii. 32). He gave Himself for us; He was delivered up for us all; He became obedient unto death. He taught the world that self-sacrificing love was the strongest, noblest, purest bond of Brotherhood. And the highest display of that love was in Himself. In the Brotherhood of Christ is the Brotherhood of man. In this Brotherhood the Jew and the Gentile have fellow-communion. They are "fellow-partakers of the promise in the Gospel."

1. *In the privileges of the present.* It is the privilege of the brethren of Christ to "know Him, whom to know is life eternal." They share in His love, they are imbued with His Spirit, they delight in His service. Yet every Christian knows that in his journey through life, if not "bonds," at least "afflictions abide him." Still he is able to rejoice amidst them all, and say with St. Paul, "These light afflictions are but for a moment." Nay they esteem it a privilege to be accounted worthy "to know the fellowship of His sufferings"; "if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified with Him" (Rom. viii. 17). All are not called to "drink the cup of fire"; yet in common suffering there is a power that binds men in the bonds of closest union; and distinctions of race, of creed, of culture are forgotten. Yet even here on earth we are permitted to enjoy something of *that* sweetness of communion with Christ and kindred souls which is itself a foretaste of the joys of heaven. There is also a fellow-communion—

2. *In the glory of the future.* The glory of the Christians' future is (a) That they shall behold the glory of Christ. "Father, those whom Thou hast given Me, I will, that where I am, they also may be with Me; that they may behold My glory, which

Thou hast given Me" (St. John xvii. 24). The glory of Christ! O, thought incomprehensible! O, sight unutterable! Is that for mortals here below? Even so. Oh, for assimilation to His Divine nature; to be renewed into His Divine image; to be "made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light." It was Christ's glory to live and die for men, and so fulfil the will of His Father. As we gaze upon His glory shall we behold the nail-prints in His hands and His feet? Or the thorn-prints that marred His holy brow? If so, shall we love Him all the more? Shall we realize all the more the glory of His humiliation, and what is the height and depth and length and breadth of redeeming love? Shall we know more of that "fulness" of which we have all received? As He sits upon the throne of His glory, shall we behold the whole creation bowed at His feet; and shall we join in the shout of universal victory? The glory of the Christians' future is (b) That they shall be "like Him." Like Christ,—fashioned after the model of Him who is our great Exemplar. Christians are to be conformed to His image, changed into His likeness, from glory to glory, by the law of divine development. To be "like Him." What a glorious, what an overwhelming thought! "Like Him,"—rejoicing in ineffable light and love. "Like Him,"—in blessed harmony with the will of an ever loving Father. "Like Him,"—in spotless purity. "Like Him,"—in royal dignity. And still our glory shall be, as everlasting ages roll, to increase in the knowledge of God, and evermore to comprehend the infinite plenitude of His grace—His eternal purpose in creation and redemption by Christ Jesus; and so with joy to praise Him in His holy temple—the one Father over all—with unceasing praise, and to go no more out for ever.

DERRYBRUSK RECTORY,
ENNISKILLEN.

JOHN W. KAYE, M.A.



"Our pilgrimage, long as it may be or short, if we have walked in Christ will leave us by the throne of God; our partial knowledge, if we have looked upon all things in Christ, will be lost in open sight; our little lives perfected, purified, harmonised in Him whom we have trusted, will become in due order parts of the one Divine Life when God is all in all."
—CANON WESTCOTT.

A Tarrying Gospel: a Word to Indifferent Christians.

"GO YE THEREFORE, AND TEACH ALL NATIONS, . . . TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER I HAVE COMMANDED YOU."—*Matthew* xxviii. 19, 20.

THE Saviour, up till the very last moment, had not surrendered His claim to sovereignty over all men, be they bond or free, rich or poor, old or young. Not long before His death He had said, "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me." In this very hour of farewell, when the clouds should receive Him out of their sight, He, a Galilean peasant, "deliberately proposes to rule all human thought, to make Himself the Centre of all human affections, to be the Lawgiver of humanity, and the Object of man's adoration." There was to be universal religion, and He would found it. And He is confident of the success of His mission. "He predicts that His Gospel will be preached in the world, and that finally there will be one fold and one shepherd of men." "Go," He says to His apostles; "Go, and make disciples of all nations."

Clearly, His religion is for the world, and for all time,—a thing for every time and every place. But the present attainment of religion leaves one token,—that now, as in the early days of Christianity, the effort of Christian disciples is absolutely necessary.

I.—Take up the axiom at the commencement: RELIGION, AS IT STANDS TO-DAY, CALLS FOR CHRISTIAN EFFORT AS MUCH AS IT EVER DID.

A glance at religion as it stands in the world to-day. Mark the wide-spread immorality in all classes, and the gross amount of irreligion in the world, as witnessed, *e.g.*, in the last religious census.

Another fact appeals to Christian effort. The gross religious ignorance, with a large proportion of the masses, of the very simplest elements of religion. We have heathens at home; at least in matters of faith that the simplest child might understand.

Again. The wide-spread indifference to the things of God. People will neither go to God's house, nor trouble about religion in any shape or form. Religion is to many absolutely nothing, or next to nothing.

Yet again. The world is a strong competitor with Christian religion. Mammon holds men and women with an iron grip. As a thorough reader of human character, Mammon knows how to pamper human weaknesses, and how to work on men's affections. Who is not moved by Music or Art? The world's god knows the fascination there is in social topics, in politics, and so on. Not that these are injurious; they ennoble man, and rouse his choicest faculties; but when they get the rule over man, religion is, in consequence, thrust out.

Here we have a string of facts declaring to every Christian man and woman that God's work is not yet done, and that even more effort must be put forth if we would prove ourselves faithful servants of Christ Jesus.

II.—WHY IS GOD'S WORK NOT SO FAR ADVANCED AS IT MIGHT BE ?

1. We who are in the religious circle are to blame. How? In that *we have not sought to put religion before the people in its right aspect*. We have read Jude to little purpose: "And on some have mercy," &c. We have told men of the terrors of the law; we have left out the story of God's great love and the Saviour's splendid compassion. After we have talked in mixed fashion of blood and fire, love and vengeance, terror and dismay, and the streets of Paradise, we have said, "Behold the Lamb of God," and "follow Him." Even at our best we have given a dull representation of the most beautiful and most emotional thing that ever came within the range of comprehension.

2. We are told that the disciples often failed to understand their Master. *They misconstrued much that the Master said*. They stood condemned of many misconceptions of their own status and their duty. In the present-day church there are misconceptions also. That, *e.g.*, wherein there is allowed a line of demarcation between priest and people,—a distinction between

pulpit and pew. And mischief results in two directions. (1) The outside world considers the distinction, and stands a little farther off. (2) Within the church there is hindrance wrought. With such a distinction, what is more natural than that some of the members should imagine that they are not responsible for religious feeling among their fellows; that all the real mission work should be performed by those "ordained to be apostles." ALL should go forth to work!

3. The church has allowed a false notion to get out among men of the world, *that there is a strong barrier between things that are sacred and secular*. The notion is as false as it can be. The Christian life has two sides, the sacred *and* secular, and diligence is demanded in both. Many forget this, and, in consequence, open themselves to the sneer that appeared some time since in the "Nineteenth Century,"—that Christians are a set of psalm-singers. The sneer was not without foundation. But why will people be so one-sided? I would commend to such some of the passages to be found in Dr. Fairbairn's Sheffield address. We are there reminded of the splendid scope of the Gospel. "The Gospel is full of great economical principles." It deals with the rights of property, and the duties of humanity. It has something to say on the question of capital and labour. And concerning men's rights and masters' obligations, masters' rights and men's obligations, religion speaks with no uncertain sound. But these are secular questions! Yes; but religion throws its bright influence upon them, and so dispels the narrowed notion that a godly man must sever himself from worldly obligations. Where we have failed is in this,—that we have largely ignored the Gospel's possibilities; we have kept it within the church; we have locked it up for believers only; we have drawn the line at duty world-ward; we have resolutely ignored the fact that religion should go out into the world and control it,—but so control it that religion should become "what Christ meant it to be, a real and applied law, opening its unworked mines of social, industrial, and political wisdom and truth."

4. *Christians are too dogmatic*. The Church has sought to

formulate the Gospel by the introduction of system ; by insisting upon the acceptance of stereotyped creeds ; by the determination to bind men in an intellectual slavery. If that be so, then the church sacrifices too much to theory, and forgets that the Gospel is a reality, adapted to the people's deep necessities. The Gospel is less a thing of creeds, &c., than it is made by many to appear. There is a spirit of fervency breathing into the deepest depths of any and every human soul. We want less "hair-splitting," and more of satisfying food for the hungry. And this, lest we should offer a stone where a hungry soul is asking for bread.

If there be anything in this Gospel which we have to carry forth that will commend itself to mankind, it is to be found in the double fact of God's love and God's friendship.

God is the Lover of mankind. The Gospel proves a thorough friend of humanity. The truth of God's love and friendship must not be locked up within a book which so few read, and many never get the chance of reading. They who have caught the sound of the Saviour's voice, and have heard Him breathe forth His loving precepts, His glorious promises, and offers of help to needy ones, must go forth and tell man of this Friend of humanity. The fact of the friendship is there, but it needs to be proclaimed far more widely than it is at present.

Insist upon the friendship of the Gospel for one and all. Then would the Gospel penetrate the darkest dens of earth, and not simply touch the happier spots. It would prove itself a god-send to the outcasts of society. It would give the death-blow to brutal habits ; it would level low the want of decency ; it would broadly mark the distinctions between ignorance and knowledge, between good and evil ; it would send a blighting influence upon vice, would discourage recklessness, would set a bound to contumacy, would be a teacher for the mind,—a god-send everyway. Out on the troubled world the Gospel would career ; and when it entered the polluted air, foul with every impurity that is poisonous to health and life, it would purify it, and bid earth's loathsome dens begone and God's free air abound.

And so, akin to this, while touching what is physical, while making earth a healthier place,—a social paradise,—while making

man to rise above his brutish instincts, wherein so many revel to-day; while giving men fit homes to dwell in, fresh air to breathe,—the dense, black cloud that lowers with moral pestilence would vanish, and the sunshine of God's love would cleanse the earth. Man would rise, would see the nobler side of life, would have his answer to the question,—Is life worth living?

Here is the Gospel's ideal! It has not been realised on earth. Much has been done; much more remains to do. Men can still hear the Lord's command,—“Go ye, and teach all nations.”

Shall we say that Christ has given us an impossible commission? Shall we say that He has urged us to a task that never can be completed? Shall we say that Christ has been carried away by enthusiasm? Shall we say that He has claimed a sceptre He can never hope to grasp? Not so! His share in this great work is sure. He treads unfalteringly; He acts almightily; He shakes the prison-bars of hell itself; He laughs at all defiances. All power is given unto Him.

But His ambassadors have often slept at their posts. Again and again the Master's cry is going through the Christian church,—“Awake, ye sleepers!”

Where are our Christian workers? Many sleeping at their posts, alas! Or if not sleeping, wrapped in self, and seeking present things, forgetting future glory.

My brothers, let us rouse to the duty right before us! Go to the ignorant, the blind, the dull, the miserable, the poor, the naked. Go to such with such a Gospel as the Saviour preaches, and let men know of very truth, that in the midst of life's perplexities there is a path to God and good.

GOMERSAL, LEEDS.

ALBERT LEE, F.R.G.S.



“The stars are not a mass but a system, moving and shining in the bosom of the tender ether. And the children of men, in whom dwells the One Spirit, are not a crowd but a divinely organized body. It matters little whether the members be in heaven or earth; they are “One Body.”—REV. JOHN PULSFORD.

The Saviour's Call.

"COME UNTO ME, ALL YE THAT LABOUR AND ARE HEAVY LADEN, AND
I WILL GIVE YOU REST."—*Matthew xi. 28.*

THE connexion between this verse and the preceding context is apt to be overlooked. Failure, however, to take it into account causes the words before us to lose much of their force. At verse 20 we find our Lord beginning to upbraid "the cities wherein most of His mighty works were done, because they repented not." Sorrow on account of the unbelief of men led Him to seek comfort in the faithfulness and purposes of the Father (vv. 25, 26). Having gained strength and fortitude by communion with Heaven, He proceeded again to address those around Him, asserting (v. 27) His perfect ability and exclusive right to execute the high commission with which He had been entrusted. Upon this declaration the words of the text are based. To the Son was entrusted the work of revealing the Father, and this duty He at once expressed His willingness to perform by inviting the "weary and heavy laden"—the ignorant and those out of the way—to come. Notice—

I.—THE SPEAKER. In Him we see—

(1) *Divine majesty.* Neither Lawgiver nor Psalmist, Historian nor Seer ever uttered words such as these in his own name and by his own authority,—*"Come unto Me and I will give you rest."* No mere human being ever had the right to do so. He only, who in olden times gave expression to these words, *"Look unto Me and be ye saved all the ends of the earth, for I am God and there is none else,"* could give the invitation contained in the text. Sinners, however, might be filled with dread, were only Divine majesty to be perceived, and, labouring under a sense of guilt, might fear to come. But terror disappears when His—

(2) *Marvellous meekness* is seen. *"I am meek,"* He exclaims, *"and lowly in heart."* This affords man the greatest possible encouragement to draw near to Him. And He is ever the same.

He who in the days of His flesh said, "I am meek," &c.; He who from His throne in glory said, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock," is "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." His Divine majesty assures of His *ability*, His meekness of His *readiness* to receive and save.

II.—THE PERSONS ADDRESSED. "All ye that labour and are heavy laden." This description is applicable to the entire human race. From a variety of circumstances men persuade themselves that these terms do not include them. Nevertheless the fact remains that men everywhere *do* labour under a yoke of pride, of covetousness, of ambition, of self-indulgence, of worldliness. To everyone then is this appeal addressed.

III.—THE BLESSING PROMISED. "Rest." Rest, because the sinner when he comes to the Saviour enjoys freedom from the love, dominion, and consequences of sin, and the alarms of a guilty conscience. How suited is the blessing to man! When Christ's invitation is accepted there is rest to the—

(1) *Mind*. From earnest minds all through the ages there has, at one time or other, gone forth the cry, "O that I knew where I might find Him!" Never will the desire thus expressed be satisfied until the seeker obeys the call of Christ and finds the words verified, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."

(2) *Conscience*. Man is a responsible being. Full well he knows that he is a guilty one. Conscience will not, cannot be at rest. From no source, save one, can relief come. The stricken conscience can only be at peace when the sinner comes to the Saviour and discovers that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them."

(3) *Heart*. Man has the capability of exercising affections of the noblest kind. Many objects may be found worthy of our love, but how friends change, and how suddenly oftentimes are they snatched away by death, leaving the heart desolate. Only can the heart be at rest when its love flows forth to Him of whom it can say, "My Beloved is mine."

(4) *Will*. The natural man is not subject to the law of God. He strives for independence, yet is led captive by Satan at his will. From this condition arises a state of anarchy, and it is

only as one realizes that the greatest freedom is obtainable through subjection to the "perfect *law of liberty*," that this state is changed and rest is obtained.

ST. PAUL'S, MILLWALL.

THOMAS J. DIXON.

The Disciples in the Storm.

"AND WHEN EVEN WAS NOW COME, HIS DISCIPLES WENT DOWN UNTO THE SEA, AND ENTERED INTO A SHIP, AND WENT OVER THE SEA TOWARD CAPERNAUM. AND IT WAS NOW DARK, AND JESUS WAS NOT COME TO THEM," &c.—*John vi. 16-21.*

THIS incident in the history of Christ gives us the opportunity to notice—

I.—THAT THE DISCIPLES OF JESUS CHRIST SOMETIMES MEET WITH STORMS EVEN WHEN THEY ATTEMPT TO CARRY OUT THEIR MASTER'S COMMANDS. True, we have no record here of a positive command to cross the Sea of Galilee, but the whole narrative suggests that it was the Saviour's will. He desired to be alone after resisting the temptation to let the people crown Him as their king. The *disciples* were not permitted to accompany Him. There are periods in our history when we have to be alone with God, the nearest and dearest friend not permitted to be present. It was the disciples' duty to reach the other side of the sea; whilst endeavouring to do so the wind rose and blew against them, the storm increased every moment in its fury; however great their exertions they could make no headway. It is natural for man to reason that the God who rules all things should remove all obstacles from the path of those who are engaged in His service. But it is not so. "It must needs be that offences should come." It is through many tribulations we are to enter the kingdom. Meeting with failures and disappointments in life is no evidence that we are not the children of God. These storms may constitute a part of our training for a higher and nobler service.

II.—THAT IT BEHOVES THE DISCIPLES OF JESUS TO CONTINUE THEIR EFFORTS EVEN WHEN IT APPEARS AS IF THEY HAD BEEN LEFT TO THEMSELVES. The disciples did not cease to row against the wind and the waves; neither did they change the course of the boat and steer towards the place they had left, saying to themselves, “The Master is there, we will wait till the storm is over and then cross with Him in the boat.” The evangelist states, “And Jesus was not come to them.” Probably they felt that deeply, and thought it would be easier to fight against the elements if they had His presence; but He was alone on the mountain, and they were left alone in this terrible danger. It would have given them greater assurance if He had been with them, still they did not relax their efforts to reach the shore. Many a missionary has had to struggle for years against the strong winds of persecution and the mighty waves of ignorance, superstition, and crime without seeing any results. Not a few ministers of the Gospel have been labouring for years without drawing the attention of men, and without enjoying much of what the world calls prosperity; they appeared as if they had been left to themselves, “and Jesus had not come to them.” Let it be so; nevertheless, it is our duty to do our work and not relax our efforts. It may be that this kind of training is necessary to teach men that prosperity is of God and not of man, and to keep the spirit of self and pride from entering the heart. Also it is possible that our Father wants us to learn the lesson of finding happiness in the performance of *duty* apart from the pleasure of visible prosperity. The greatest success of life after all is to obey the voice of heaven, whether it be to row against the fierce winds of adversity in the night, or to sail on the smooth sea of prosperity.

III.—THAT THE COMING OF THE MASTER IS NOT ALWAYS RECOGNIZED BY THE DISCIPLES. “And they were afraid.” The scene was so strange and unexpected, they were not prepared for it. They had never seen a person walking on the sea, and were afraid till they heard the words, “It is I, be not afraid.” Christ was coming to their help, though they knew Him not. It is so at times in our little lives and insignificant histories. Some years

ago we were struggling against adversity, do whatever we would the wind was too strong for us, but suddenly there was a lull in the storm. We did not understand it *then*, but now we perceive that Jesus came to our assistance, walking on the waves of our sorrow and distress. Abraham did not recognize his heavenly visitors till the Lord spoke about the fate of Sodom. Moses was going to examine the bush that burned and was not consumed: he knew not that the Lord was there. The two disciples going to Emmaus did not know the Saviour when He came to them till the breaking of bread. The pressing cares of life often prevent men seeing the God who is coming to their help so frequently; and the din and tumult of the world are such that they cannot hear His voice. When we begin to realize God's presence in adversity, it is so strange that we say to ourselves, "It is a dream; it is too good to be true." Living too far from the spiritual is the cause of that; because there is nothing strange in that the God who feeds the ravens should help His children when they are in trouble.

IV.—THAT THE MASTER'S PRESENCE REMOVES ALL DIFFICULTIES FROM THE DISCIPLES' WAY. The disciples had to row till Jesus came. When they received Him into the boat they soon reached the other side. We know not whether the storm suddenly abated, or whether He caused the boat to glide towards the shore in spite of the contrary wind and boisterous waves. It is immaterial. The disciples' difficulty was over and their peril gone as soon as they recognized Christ. We are not to perplex ourselves as to the *manner* in which deliverance comes, that is to be left in God's hands. Daniel knew not whether means would be provided to keep him from the lions' den, or whether he was to be kept from harm there; he was certain God would preserve his life. The three young men in Babylon the same. If we will but let the Christ enter our hearts, He will protect us in His own way. His presence will dispel our fears, remove all hindrances to spiritual progress, and bring the heaven of God into our spirits.

OFFORD ROAD.

JENKIN JONES.

Homiletical Commentary.

NOTES ON THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

“Wars and Battles.”

Chapter iv. 1-3.—“FROM WHENCE COME WARS AND FIGHTINGS AMONG YOU? COME THEY NOT HENCE, EVEN OF YOUR LUSTS THAT WAR IN YOUR MEMBERS? YE LUST, AND HAVE NOT: YE KILL, AND DESIRE TO HAVE, AND CANNOT OBTAIN: YE FIGHT AND WAR, YET YE HAVE NOT, BECAUSE YE ASK NOT. YE ASK, AND RECEIVE NOT, BECAUSE YE ASK AMISS, THAT YE MAY CONSUME IT UPON YOUR LUSTS.”

“WAR” is a word appropriated almost exclusively to the strifes that are fought out on the wide battle fields of nations. We do not expect to find it used for anything less imposing than the shock of contending armies, the confused noise, and the garments rolled in blood. It is when nation rises against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, that there are wars and rumours of wars; it is when passion has taken possession of the heart of a people, and when under its fell sway they send forth to kill and to lay waste the territory of another people who have risen against them, that we speak of them as being “at war.” The word is of such fearful import, it carries with it such fearful results, that we shrink from using it except in connection with wide-spread desolation, bloodshed, and death.

And yet, speaking of the assemblies of professedly Christian men, of the relation in which these men stood mutually toward each other, and of their actual treatment the one of the other, the

apostle does not see anything out of place in applying this terrible expression to what he saw going on among them; he does not shrink from speaking about “wars” and “battles” in connection with them: nay, he goes so far as to assert, in the plainest and most direct words he

Wars and
battles in the
Church.

could find, that in these wars and battles something like actual bloodshed had occurred,—“From whence come wars and fightings among you? . . . ye kill.” Very likely this is not to be taken literally—that passionate violence rose to such a height as to become an actual murderer, though it is possible that at some rare outbreak something of the kind may have taken place. With the hot-headed, hasty, fanatical Jew it was too often a word and a blow, and not unlikely the apostle had heard of blows that had been fatal. Still this must have been a very rare occurrence. And when he speaks of “wars,” and “battles,” and “killing,” he is to be understood as referring to the infringements of that spiritual peace and mutual love which ought ever to characterise the assemblies of God’s people; as speaking of that lofty spiritual region of life and feeling, where to speak an angry word, an angry word without a cause; to indulge an ill-wishing thought is to kill; where the man who does not love his brother takes that brother’s life. The apostle is writing to professing Christian men, to very imperfect, very worldly professing Christian men; still he is writing to men who are very far from having thrown off the Christian name, or renounced the Christian spirit; and his words are to be interpreted accordingly. The wars and the battles and the killings are what have been witnessed more or less frequently, with more or less intensity, ever since partially renewed men, bringing with them their strong natural propensities—love of pleasure or love of power—into the midst of those who assemble themselves together in the name of Jesus Christ to do His work, have sought there the gratification of those propensities. If a man does not have the spread of the peace of God at heart, there will very soon be heard from his lips words of dispeace, wars and battles and slaughters. Worldly lusts bring forth their worldly fruits—discord and death.

But now, it being the region of the heart of which the apostle mainly, at least, speaks, is it not after all a disproportionate use of the words “wars” and “battles” to apply them to the petty jarrings and strifes of such insignificant, unheard of communities; is it not altogether foreign to the purpose to designate such remotely separated things by the same

Heart Battles.

name? You may speak of the wars, of the sanguinary battles of an Alexander, but what proportion to these have the envies, the jealousies, the heart-burnings and strifes of a few unknown men and women whose names, even if they were to gain all that their hearts could wish, would never be heard of beyond their native hamlet or town? Is it not a misuse of words to speak of wars and battles and slaughters here?

"In one of the Arabian Tales, there is a story of a fairy-tent which a young prince brought, hidden in a walnut shell, to his father. Placed in the council chamber it grew till it became large enough to hold the king and all his counsellors. Taken into the court-yard it filled the space, till all the household stood beneath its shade. Brought into the midst of the great plain without the city, where all the army was encamped, it spread its mighty awning abroad till it gave shelter to an innumerable host."* The fairy-tent, hidden in the walnut, was the gigantic canopy under which hosts could encounter hosts, wars be carried on, battles fought out to the bitter end. Whence come wars and

The Fruit in the Seed. battles, Alexander's hosts, Cæsar's legions, desolating fair lands? Let the gigantic tent shrink back to its original, let it be traced to its first inception, and all this sense of disproportion we have been speaking about will pass from us; it will be seen to be the self-same thing, whether as a single lust in one man's heart, or spread out in all its results, unbounded ruin, desolation, death. "From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts, your pleasures, that war in your members?" Look carefully at these, and while you look you will see expanding before your very eyes the tent under whose canopy the bloodiest wars have been waged, the most desolating battles have been fought.

Let us try to follow the apostle as he shows us the origin of war, the similarity of nature between all forms of it, its sameness wherever it is found. And to begin where he begins, with the lusts or pleasures which war in our members. Lust

Distinguish between lust and pleasure. is the eager forward-stretching after some object on which, so to speak, it has set its ungratified

* Stopford Brooke, "*Christ in Modern Life*," p. 1.

desire; pleasure is the gratification it experiences when it has reached and possesses it. The lust of power, for example: this is the hungering cupidity that feels itself empty, balked of that which alone can satisfy it; which casts about, devising plans, compassing sea and land, till it obtains its object. The pleasure of power is the sense of gratification when the lust of power has succeeded in its efforts to gain it. Lust or pleasure, it matters little which word we use, wars and fightings come, so says the apostle, from the lusts, or the pleasures, as he prefers to put it here, that war in our members. Let us try to follow him.

In the condition in which man is by nature, that is, so long as he is not regenerated by the Spirit of God, and thereby endowed with that new nature which fixes itself solely upon and finds its happiness solely in God: in this condition his one
Man as he is by nature. desire is that every desire he has shall be gratified, shall have unlimited gratification; that every one of his pleasures shall have its own banquet spread for itself, and that the unceasing invitation shall be—eat, drink, and be merry. One of his “pleasures” is bodily appetite: he takes pleasure in this, and his pleasure is to have unlimited pleasure in this; he refuses to be thwarted in its gratification, and if he is thwarted, he gets irritated, angry, quarrelsome. Another of his pleasures is money: the love of possession, of getting and keeping; he
“Pleasures.” has gratification in this, and if he is thwarted in this, he is irritated, angry, quarrelsome. And so with the love of power, of position, of reputation among men. These are his pleasures; he demands unlimited gratification for each of them: if he is checked in their unlimited gratification, he is angry, irritated, quarrelsome.

Observe, however, these pleasures are contradictory the one of the other; the gratification of the one is incompatible with the gratification of the other. A man cannot have unbounded grati-
Contradict each other. fication of the appetites, and unbounded enjoyment of high repute among his fellow-men at the same time; if he is to have power, he must not hoard his money, but part with it freely; if he is to acquire knowledge, he cannot afford to lay the reins upon the neck of passion. There is a

constant check here: one pleasure thwarts the other. At the same time, this does not change their nature or make them the less bent, each one, upon its own gratification. The lust of appetite and the lust of power do not mutually agree, so to speak, to give up each of them a part, compromising with each other; the one may get the upper hand, but it is only by crushing down if not crushing out the other, and this means irritation, anger, quarrelsomeness. And so, as James tells us, "Pleasures war in the members: they desire and have not, they covet and cannot obtain. Whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence even of your pleasures that war in your members?"

It is here we are to look for the origin of strife: if there were no warring, antagonistic pleasures in the internal life, there would be no working out of the results of this antagonism in external history. It is wars within that make wars without. Observe the process: "Ye lust and have not"; ye desire the unlimited gratification of your pleasures, and ye do not get it; ye stretch out your hands for what ye cannot get; but ungratified passion is irritated passion, because it is thwarted passion—passion checked midway, passing into a chronic condition of angry quarrelsomeness, ready on the least occasion to flame out in bitter wrath, clamour, strife. This is the stage. But when a man is thwarted, he will very soon set about thwarting other men; and this is the next stage. *He* is not the only thwarted and irritated man, there are plenty such all about him; these as well have been setting their hearts upon what they have not reached; they too have lusted, and have not obtained. Well, then, it but needs the least spark to fall upon such combustibles to set them in a flame, devouring flames, the one of the other. Carry it one stage further, to the stage which the apostle here contemplates, and which he here rebukes. Suppose in a community, in a Christian church, the thing lusted after by most, if not by all, were power, or pre-eminence, or, better still, because nearer the thought of the apostle, such a degree of worldly prosperity as would naturally seem to justify the claim of pre-eminence, what a field have we here for ungratified lust, for the consequent irritation, for the

The origin
of strife.

Natural
history of
strife.

consequent "wars and battles." A congregation of believers who lived and moved and had their being according to Diotrephes, who loved the pre-eminence, every man looking on this as the supreme object of desire, each scheming, contriving, pushing his neighbour aside for this—how could there be anything but wars and battles, jealousies and strifes? The soil is rank with their baleful seeds; the sword is never put up into its sheath; the tent of eastern story has expanded from its puny dimensions till it covers and enshrouds armies and hosts. Ye lust; ye hate and envy; ye fight and war.

It is not for nothing the apostle uses these terrible words of the discords and selfish aims and jealousies of men who call themselves by the Christian name. It is that he may arrest our serious thought and make us examine ourselves whether there be any of this mutinous, murderous spirit in ourselves; mutinous, because it is in direct opposition to, in defiant antagonism to Him we call Lord; murderous, because it aims at the life of those who are brethren in Christ. You do not need to shed blood to be a murderer in God's sight; you do not need to smite the man to the ground! You can kill him by the glance of the eye he never sees, by the thought of the heart you never reveal. "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer." Yes, but we forget this, and we need to be reminded of this; we need to be brought to our senses and frightened back from thoughts of envy, of jealousy, of hatred.

Listen further to the apostle's account. "Ye lust, ye hate and envy, ye fight and war"; and yet in the midst of all this ye are thoroughly unsatisfied, these desires of yours are ungratified, ye have no rest or peace with all your striving, your soul is in want. "Ye lust, and have not." In the Revised Version the "yet" in the second verse is omitted, and rightly. "Ye fight and war, 'yet' ye have not, because ye ask not." The "yet" is to be left out, a full stop to be put after "ye fight and war," and a new sentence to begin at "ye have not." The apostle is beginning a new subject; he is done with the process by which lust arrives at war, and he is again taking up that other which he had but

Practical aim
of
the apostle.

The sense
of want which
pleasure
leaves.

touched upon, namely, the sense of want which men in the pursuit of the gratification of their lusts are ever experiencing, from the first beginnings of it to its close. They "lust and have not," they "kill and cannot obtain," they "fight and war," and still they are in want. How does all this come about? In one or other of two ways, either of them sufficient to account for it. They do not ask, they avoid taking God into their confidence; this would account for it: they ask, but in a selfish spirit; this would account for it: and wherever in a Christian man's experience he is not able to say of the Giver of all things, "there is no *want* to them that fear Him," it is because he does not ask, or because he asks amiss—in a selfish and, therefore, God-dishonouring spirit.

"Ye have not, because ye ask not." They were desirous, as it would appear, of temporal prosperity, of the wealth which ministers to the necessities of this life, to the comforts of this life; but they had not prayed for it, they had not asked it of God. They had striven after it in their own strength and by their own endeavours, and they had not got it. If they had asked it of God they would have got it; or, if they had not got it, they would have got what would more than have supplied its place, a calm and settled satisfaction in God Himself, a sweet contentment with Him and with all His ways, "which would have kept *them* in perfect peace whose minds were stayed upon God." It is right and becoming to ask from God the necessities of this life,—daily bread, health, soundness of mind, clothing and a dwelling place, friendship and its joys. Is it wrong to wish for the comforts of life, to be raised above the constant pressure of narrow circumstances, the gnawing anxieties concerning food and raiment and the future welfare of those who depend upon us? May we not pray the prayer of Agar, "Give me not riches but give me not poverty"? But whosoever he be who prays for these, who really goes to God and asks for these, will do it in such utter dependence upon God, that should God refuse to hear him, he has in this very refusal but another form of God's care. He will still say, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want." He who has given us His son,

Prayer,
selfish and
unselfish.

will He not give us bread? We often have not because we ask not.

But oftener, far oftener, because we ask amiss, because we do not ask unselfishly, with a regard for God's glory and our own higher good. Men often pray wicked prayers, blasphemous prayers, prayers which God cannot hear. Of course men do not deliberately and of set purpose do the thing that James here says they do,—asking gifts from God that they may consume them upon their lusts; but it is what is really often done. But, “if I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.”

“Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts,” your pleasures, those pleasures which are the real cause and origin of all the “wars and battles” which everywhere lay waste the fair fields of spiritual life.

Is there a cure? What is the cure? “The Lord is the portion of my soul. O, my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord, I have no good beyond Thee. My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed.” This were the mortal wound to

The cure. all lust, to all wrong desire; this would kill off the spirit which kills, which leads to “wars and battles.” Let God but be the chief object of desire, and then the soul is satisfied with marrow and with fat; then it drinks of the river of His pleasures and is satisfied; then it feels no want.

In a congregation where every member subordinated his own desires to the one desire for God, and for the glory of God, the question would never need to be put: “Whence come wars and fightings *among* you?”

Practical.

GLASGOW.

PETER RUTHERFORD.

GERMS OF PRACTICAL THOUGHT EVOLVED FROM THE APOCALYPSE.

[The writer of these Homiletic Sketches aims not to decide between the numerous theories and speculations which the interpreters of this book have propounded. So far as his work is concerned it does not matter who the author may be, the exact time in which he lived, the place of his writing, or the peculiarities of his language. The whole book appears to his mind as a *grand, prophetic poem*, full of strange and grotesque symbols. As a prophecy, some have regarded it as *already fulfilled*, such as Grotius, Hammond, Bossuet, Calmet, Wetstein, Eichhorn, Hug, Herder, Ewald, Lücke, De Wette, Dusterdieck, Stuart, Lee, and Maurice. These are called the *Præterist* expositors. Some have regarded it as yet almost entirely *unfulfilled*. All events referred to, except those in the first three chapters, they take as pointing to what is yet to come. Among such interpreters in recent times are Drs. Todd, Maitland, Newton, De Burgh, &c. These are called *Futurists*. Some regard it as in a *progressive course* of fulfilment, running on from the first century to the end of time. Amongst these interpreters the following names are included: Mede, Sir I. Newton, Vitringa, Bengel, Woodhouse, Faber, E. B. Elliott, Wordsworth, Hengstenberg, Ebrard, &c. These are called *Historical* expositors. The present Homiletic Sketches will be drawn in the light of this school. The whole book is a symbolical representation of a great moral campaign between right and wrong, running on from the dawn of the Christian era to the crash of doom. Babylon here is, so to say, the metropolis of evil and Jerusalem the metropolis of good. The battle is not between the mere forms, organizations, and institutions of good and evil, but between their *spirit*, their essence. The victories of Christ here are, to use the language of Carpenter, "against all wrong-thoughtedness, wrong-heartedness, and wrong-spiritedness."]

No. VI.

Christ's Ministry on Earth and His Existence in Heaven.

"AND HE LAID HIS RIGHT HAND UPON ME, SAYING UNTO ME, FEAR NOT; I AM THE FIRST AND THE LAST: I AM HE THAT LIVETH, AND WAS DEAD; AND, BEHOLD, I AM ALIVE FOR EVERMORE, AMEN; AND HAVE THE KEYS OF HELL AND OF DEATH."—*Revelation* i. 17, 18

THESE verses lead us to consider two subjects: the ministry of Christ on earth and His existence in Heaven.

I.—CHRIST'S MINISTRY ON EARTH. "*And He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not.*" John's vision of Christ struck him to the ground with fear. The remarks of Trenchard on these

words cannot be overlooked: "The unholy, and all flesh is such that it cannot endure immediate contact with the holy, the human with the Divine. Heathen legend, so far as its testimony may be accepted, consents here with Christian truth. Semele must perish if Jupiter reveals himself to her in his glory, being consumed

in the brightness of that glory. 'Thou canst not see My face: for there shall no man see Me, and live' (Ex. xxxiii. 20). For every man it is a dreadful thing to stand face to face with God. The beloved disciple who had handled the Word of life, lain in His Lord's bosom in the days of His flesh, can as little as any other endure the revelation of His majesty, or do without that '*Fear not*,' with which the Lord reassures him here. This same '*Fear not*' is uttered on similar occasions to Isaiah (vi. 7), to Daniel (x. 12), to Peter (Luke v. 1), to the three at the Transfiguration, of whom John himself was one (Matt. xvii. 7). Nor is this reassurance confined to words only: the Lord at the same time lays His hand upon him—something parallel to which goes along with the '*Fear not*' of three among the instances just referred to; and from the touch of that hand the seer receives strength again, and is set, no doubt, upon his feet once more (Ez. i. 28; ii. 1, 2). The '*right hand*' being ever contemplated in Scripture as the hand of power alike for God (Deut. xxxiii. 2; Is. xlvi.

13; Acts vii. 55) and for man (Gen. xlviii. 14; Zech. iii. 1; Matt. v. 30), it is only fit that with the right hand of the Lord he should be thus strengthened and revived."

The point here to be observed is that *Christ's ministry on earth is to remove fear*. Of all the passions that take possession of the soul there are none more unvirtuous in nature and pernicious in influence than fear. It implies a lack of trust in the personal, loving care of the great Father. It is hostile to all heroism and moral nobility of soul. Now Christ's ministry is to remove this. He says to man, "It is I, be not afraid." (1) He removes fear of *poverty*. By unfolding the Fatherly providence of God. (2) He removes fear of *punishment*. By proclaiming the forgiveness of sins. (3) He removes fear of *death*. By unveiling a heaven beyond the grave. "In My Father's house are many mansions."

II.—CHRIST'S EXISTENCE IN HEAVEN. "*I am the first and the last: I am He that liveth (and the Living One), and was dead (and I was dead); and, behold, I am alive for ever-*

more, Amen; and have the keys of hell (death) and of death (Hades)." One might have thought that after Christ had received such malignant treatment on this earth, His departure from it would be an everlasting termination of all His communications with it: that His last word on earth to men would be His last word to them until the day of doom: that on His ascension to heaven He would withdraw Himself with a righteous indignation from this corrupt planet, turn away from it and speak only to intelligences who would devoutly hail His every utterance. Not so, however. Here, after three-score years of personal absence from this earth, with unabated love for our fallen race, He breaks the silence of eternity and makes such communications to John, on the isle of Patmos, as would be for the good of all coming generations. The words lead us to consider now His existence in heaven. Notice—

First: His life in heaven is a life that succeeds an extraordinary death. "*I am He that liveth, and was dead.*" Life after death is a life in

itself truly wonderful. Such a life we have never seen. But the life of Christ in heaven is a life succeeding a death that has no parallel in the history of the universe. There are at least three circumstances that mark off His death at an infinite distance from that of any other being that ever died. (1) *Absolute spontaneity.* No being ever died but Christ who had the feeling that he need never die, that death could be for ever escaped. Christ had it. "He had power to lay down His life." (2) *Entire relativeness.* Every other man that ever died, died for himself, died because he was a sinner and the seed of death was sown in his nature. Not so with Christ, He died for others. (3) *Universal influence.* The death of the most important man that ever lived has an influence of a comparatively limited degree. It extends but over a contracted circle. Only a few of the age feel it; future ages feel it not; it is nothing to the universe. But Christ's death had an influence that admits of no measurement. It extended over all the past of humanity. It was the great

event anticipated by the ages that preceded it. This is the great event that will be looked back to by all coming men. It thrills the heavens of God. "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain," is the song of eternity. Christ's death fell on the universe as the pebble on the centre of a lake, widening in circles of influence on to its utmost boundary.

Secondly: His life in heaven is a life of endless duration. "*I am alive for evermore.*"

(1) His endless duration is a necessity of His nature. "*I am He that liveth.*" There are moral intelligences, we amongst them, that may live for ever; but not by necessity of nature. We live because the Infinite supports us; let Him withdraw His sustaining agency and we cease to breathe. Not so with Christ. His life is absolutely independent of the universe. He is the "I AM." (2) His endless duration is the glory of the good. "*Amen.*" When Christ says "*I am alive for evermore,*" the unfallen and redeemed universe may well exclaim, "*Amen.*" Whatever other

friends die the great Friend lives on.

Thirdly: His life in heaven is a life of absolute dominion over the destinies of men. "*I have the keys of hell (death) and of death (Hades).*" He has dominion over the bodies and souls of men as well when they are separated from each other as previous to their dissolution. "He is the Lord of the dead and of the living." From His absolute dominion over the destinies of men four things may be inferred. (1) There is nothing accidental in human history. He has the key of death. No grave is opened but by His hand. (2) Departed men are still in existence. He has the key of Hades (the world of separate souls) as well as of the grave. They live therefore. (3) Death is not the introduction to a new moral kingdom. The same Lord is here as there. What is right here, therefore, is right there, and the reverse. (4) We may anticipate the day when death shall be swallowed up in victory.

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No. VII.

Christ Enjoining the Record of His Revelation to Man and Explaining its Meaning.

“WRITE THE THINGS WHICH THOU HAST SEEN, AND THE THINGS WHICH ARE, AND THE THINGS WHICH SHALL BE HEREAFTER; THE MYSTERY OF THE SEVEN STARS WHICH THOU SAWEST IN MY RIGHT HAND, AND THE SEVEN GOLDEN CANDLESTICKS. THE SEVEN STARS ARE THE ANGELS OF THE SEVEN CHURCHES: AND THE SEVEN CANDLESTICKS WHICH THOU SAWEST ARE THE SEVEN CHURCHES.”—*Revelation* i. 19, 20.

THESE words suggest two general remarks concerning Christ.

I.—THAT HE REQUIRES MEN TO RECORD THE REVELATIONS HE MAKES TO THEM. He is the Great Revealer of God to humanity, and His revelations are ever recurring and constant. And here we are taught that they are not only to be taught and studied but to be *recorded*. The revelations here referred to are of three classes. (1) Those which *had been experienced*. “*The things which thou hast seen.*” What things John had already seen! How manifold, wonderful, significant! What man of any reflection or conscience has not seen things from God. (2) Those things which *were now present*. Things that were

at hand, that came within his observation and consciousness. There are eternal principles that underlie and shape all human history. These principles are as present as the air we breathe, although the majority of the race are unconscious of them. There are some which reveal themselves in vivid consciousness,—these shall be recorded, their images shall be photographed on the heart. The other class were (3) Those which *were approaching*. “*The things which will be hereafter.*” With that inspiration of Him who sees the end from the beginning, the human soul may catch a glimpse of all future times. The divinely inspired genius becomes to some extent independent of all space and time,

overleaps all boundaries—geographic and chronologic. It seems to have been so with John on this occasion. In his visions the future ages of the world appeared down to the final trump of doom. John seems to have

“Dipt into the future, far as human eye could see,
Saw the vision of the world, and all the wonders that would be.”

Now these three classes of things John had to write down,—those that had unfolded themselves, those that were unfolding themselves, and those that would to the end of time. Whatever man has seen, or will see of the Divine, he is bound to record—“*Write.*” Literature, though sadly corrupted and the source of enormous mischief, is a Divine institution. Rightly employed it is one of the grandest forces in human life. Truth orally communicated is inexpressibly important and immeasurably influential. He who speaks truth rationally, faithfully, earnestly, devoutly, touches the deepest springs in the great world of mind. What bloodless and brilliant victories the true has won in all ages! Albeit truth written

has some advantages over truth spoken, for man seems to multiply himself by the book he has written. His book is a kind of second incarnation, in which he may live and work ages after the fingers that held his pen are mouldered into dust. Thank God for books, our best companions, always ready with their counsel and their comfort. They are arks that have borne down to us, over the floods of centuries, the vital germs of departed ages. Let men write them, but let their subjects be not the trashy things of time and sensual pleasure, the visions of a wild fancy or the speculations of a reckless intellect, but the revelations that Christ has made. The text suggests another general remark concerning Christ.

II.—THAT HE EXPLAINS TO MEN THE MEANING OF THE REVELATION HE MAKES TO THEM. “*The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in My right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks.*” There are two kinds of mystery, the *knowable* and *unknown*. (1) *The unknown of the knowable.* It is con-

ceivable that the whole created universe is knowable even to the intellect of finite man. Yet what the most enlightened man knows is but a fraction of what to him is still unknown—a mystery. Hence every step in the advance of an earnest enquirer is turning the mystery of to-day into an intelligible fact of to-morrow. What is mystery to one man is not so to another; and what is mystery to a man to-day is no mystery to-morrow. The other kind of mystery is (2) *The unknown of the unknowable*. He whom we call God is the great mystery, the absolutely unknowable—whom no man hath seen or can see. Now in the former sense the meaning of the word “mystery” is here employed.* In Christ’s explanation here we have two things worth note.

First: The ideal Christian pastor. “*The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches.*” Who the angels were is a matter of speculation. Every settled Christian community, whether religious

or not, has some leading person or persons amongst them. In these Christian congregations in Asia Minor there seems to have been some leading man. He was, no doubt, like Timothy in Ephesus—the pastor. Every true Christian minister or angel is a “*star*.” His light is borrowed, but borrowed from the primal source—the “*Sun of Righteousness*.” His orbit is Divine. Faithful teachers are stars that shall shine for ever (Dan. xii. 3); false teachers are wandering stars (Jude 13), or stars which fall from heaven (Rev. viii. 10; vi. 13; xii. 4).

Secondly: The ideal Christian church. “*The seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.*” Observe (1) Christian congregations are lights. “*Candlesticks.*” (2) They are precious lights. They are “*golden.*” They throw the best kind of information upon an ignorant world. (3) They are imperfect lights. A lamp is a composite and requires constant care. No finite power can make the sun

* See an exposition on the first three chapters of this book by Andrew Tait, LL.D., F.R.S.E.,—“*MESSAGES TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES.* Page 104, *in loco*.”

brighter or larger. Not so with the lamp.* The lamp may grow dim and go out—the “golden candlestick” may be there but no light issues therefrom. “It was thought by the ancients that if ever

the fires which burned on the altar of Vesta became extinct, they could not be rekindled unless by being brought in contact with the sun.”

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No. VIII.

THE SEVEN EPISTLES COMPARED.

Homiletic Prologue.

IN order to avoid repetition when we come to deal specially with each epistle, it seems desirable to notice some circumstances common to all and some peculiar to a portion.

I.—The circumstances of these letters COMMON TO ALL. What are these; what are the points on which they all seem to agree?

First: In all *Christ assumes different aspects*. He does not appear to all alike. He approaches each in some special character. Thus (1) To Ephesus He appears as One

“who holdeth the seven stars in His hand and who walketh among the seven golden candlesticks.” (2) To Smyrna He appears as “the first and the last, who was dead and is alive.” (3) To Pergamos as He of “the sharp sword with two edges.” (4) To Thyatira as “the Son of God, who hath His eyes as a flame of fire.” (5) To Sardis He appears as “He who hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars.” (6) To Philadelphia as “He that is holy and true, and hath the key of David.”

* On the word “seven,” as used in the Apocalypse, read the work of Dean Trench on the Seven Churches of Asia. Pages 57-64.

(7) To Laodicea as "The Amen, the faithful and true witness."

Secondly: In all *Christ addresses Himself through a special officer*. "Unto the angel." Who is the angel is a matter of controversy, and, to me, of little interest. Some seem very anxious to make him a bishop. If by bishop is meant a man who lives in a palace, fares sumptuously every day, rolls in chariots of wealth, and is invested with high-sounding titles, I do not think he could have been a bishop. No doubt he was the appointed messenger of the little community,—one who had to receive and convey communications of general interest. Such appears to have been the opinion of Caleb Morris.*

Thirdly: In all *Christ declares His thorough knowledge of their moral history*. Not merely the muscular but the mental; not merely the works done *by* the body but the works done *in* the body.

Fourthly: In all *Christ promises great blessings to the morally victorious*. "To him that overcometh." It is not

said that every conqueror can have the same reward. To one is promised the "tree of life." To another, "to eat of the hidden manna," to see a "white stone with a new name written on it." To another, "power over the nations." To another, to be "clothed in white raiment." To another, to be made a "pillar in the temple of My God." And to another, "to sit with Me in My throne," &c. To every moral conqueror there is a promised reward.

Fifthly: In all *Christ commands attention to the voice of the Spirit*. "He that hath ears to hear let him hear." The Spirit—the Spirit of truth and right, of love and God.

Sixthly: In all *Christ's grand aim is spiritual culture*. His admonitions, promises, and threats in each case tend in this direction.

Seventhly: In all *Christ observes a threefold division*. (1) "There is a reference to some of the attributes of Him who addresses the Church. (2) A disclosure of the characteristics of the Church, with appropriate admonition, encouragement, or reproof.

* See *Homilist*, Vol. xxiv., Page 18.

(3) Promises of reward to all who persevere in their Christian course and overcome the spiritual enemies who assault them."—*Moses Stuart*. Notice—

II.—Circumstances in which SOME OF THEM DIFFER.

First: We find two, namely, Smyrna and Philadelphia who *received commendation*. They do not seem to be blamed for anything in doctrine, discipline, or manner of life. Of Smyrna He says, "*Thou art rich*," that is, "*rich*" in the elements of moral goodness. Of the Church of Philadelphia He said, "Thou hast kept the word of My patience."

Secondly: Two of them, namely, Sardis and Laodicea *are censured*. Of the Church of Sardis he says, "*Thou hast*

a name that thou livest, and thou art dead." Of the Church of Laodicea He says, "*I know thy works, that thou art neither cold or hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.*"

Thirdly: Three others are both *praised and blamed*. Those written to Ephesus, Pergamos, and Thyatira contain mingled censure and commendation. In some respects they deserve the one, and in some the other. In three cases, however, the approbation precedes the blame, thus showing, as *Moses Stuart* says, and as Paul in his epistles shows, that it was more grateful to commend than to reprove.

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"There are three weighty matters of the law—justice, mercy, and truth; and of these the Teacher puts truth last, because that cannot be known but by a course of acts of justice and love. But men put in all their efforts truth first, because they mean by it their own opinions; and thus while the world has many people who would suffer martyrdom in the cause of what they call truth, it has few who will suffer even a little inconvenience in that of justice and mercy."—*RUSKIN*.

SEEDS OF SERMONS ON THE SECOND BOOK OF THE KINGS.

Lamentable Unskilfulness and Incurability.

“NOTWITHSTANDING THE LORD,” &c.—2 *Kings* xxiii. 26–39.

THIS short fragment of Jewish history reflects great disgrace on human nature, and may well humble us in the dust. It brings into prominence at least two subjects suggestive of solemn and practical thought.

I.—THE WORTHLESSNESS OF UNWISELY DIRECTED EFFORTS TO BENEFIT MEN HOWEVER WELL INTENDED. Josiah, it seems from the narrative, was one of the best of Israel's kings. “Like unto him was there no king before him.” Most strenuous were his efforts to improve his country; to raise it from the worship of idols to the worship of the true God. He sacrifices his very life to his endeavours, and what was his success? NIL. “*Notwithstanding the Lord turned not from the fierceness of His great wrath, wherewith His anger was*

kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations that Manasseh had provoked Him withal. And the Lord said, I will remove Judah also out of My sight, as I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city Jerusalem which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, My name shall be there. Now the rest of the acts of Josiah, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?” All the efforts of this noble king seemed to be abortive. But why? Because, as shewn in our preceding article, while his motive was good his methods were bad. Instead of depending upon argument and suasion, moral influence, and the embodiment of moral goodness, he uses force. “*He slew all the priests of the high places that were upon the*

altar, burned men's bones upon them," &c.

Here is a principle in the Divine government of man. No man, however good, can accomplish a good thing unless he employs wise means. The Church of Rome is an example. Its aim, the bringing of the world into the one fold, is sublimely good, but the means it has employed not only neutralise the purpose but drive the bulk of the population away into the wilderness of infidelity and crime. It is not enough for a church to have good aims; it must have wise methods: not enough for preachers to desire the salvation of their people; they must use means in harmony with the laws of thought and feeling. Hence fanatical churches and preachers have always done more harm than good. "If the iron be blunt, and he do not whet the edge, then must he put to more strength: but wisdom is profitable to direct."

Indeed, this man's unwise efforts not only failed to benefit his country, they brought ruin on himself. He lost his life. *"In his days Pharaoh-nechoh king of Egypt went up*

against the king of Assyria to the river Euphrates: and king Josiah went against him; and he slew him at Megiddo, when he had seen him. And his servants carried him in a chariot dead from Megiddo." No doubt Josiah was inspired with patriotic and religious purposes in going forth against Pharaoh-nechoh; and in seeking to prevent the march of a bloody tyrant and a hostile force through his territory in order to attack the king of Syria. But where was his wisdom? What chance had he to hurl back such a formidable invasion? None whatever. Single handedly, of course, he could do nothing. And what help could he obtain from his subjects, most of whom had fallen into that moral degradation which robs the soul of all true courage and skill? Another subject that here comes pressing on our attention is—

II.—THE AMAZING INCORRIGIBILITY OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE. Do we find the men of Israel were improved by the efforts of such kings as Hezekiah and Josiah? Nay. They seem to grow worse. Scarcely was Josiah in his

grave before his son, Jehoahaz, who was twenty-three years old, ascended the throne, and during the three months of his reign he "did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord;" and when he is struck down another son of Josiah, Eliakim, who was afterwards named Jehoiakim, took the throne, and after a reign of twenty-five years, the record is, "he did that which is evil in the sight of the Lord."

Here then is moral incorrigibility! I know not why these people have been called "the people of God," and "the Jewish Church." In all history, ancient or modern, I know no people whose doings were of a baser type. With all the lofty advantages which they had, and with the interpositions of heaven vouchsafed to them, they seem to grow worse from age to age. The little springs of depravity that broke forth from their great ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, seemed to deepen, swell in volume and widen as time rolled on. It was a kind of moral Thames or Stygian stream. You can scarcely point to one pellucid wave rising on its surface. It was

foul from bed to bosom. How sadly have the professed disciples of Christ misinterpreted Jewish history. So much so that they have Judaised the very Gospel, and made Judaism a model after which they have shaped the assemblies of Christendom. Hence a professional priesthood, ritualistic observances, sacerdotal vestments, hereditary kings, and bloody wars consecrated even by priests. Mahomet, Peter the Hermit, and even our own Cromwell borrowed sanction for their sanguinary deeds from this so-called Jewish Church.

CONCLUSION.—A word first *to those who desire to be useful.* Unless you practically recognise the truly scientific adaptation of means to ends, and understand the eternal principles by which the human mind can be rightly influenced, you will "labour in vain and spend your strength for nought." There is no way by which coercion can travel to a man's soul; no way by which cruelties and cant can enlighten, strengthen, and ennoble souls. A word, secondly, *to those who desire to be benefited.* You may have seers

from heaven working among you endeavouring to improve you and elevate you. But unless you yield to the influences and attend to the counsels you will grow worse and worse. Pharaoh's heart grew harder under the ministry of Moses on the banks of the Nile; the Jewish people became worse and worse under

the forty years' ministry in Idumea, and the contemporaries of Christ filled up their measure of iniquity under His benign and enlightening ministrations. The things that belong to your peace may become the elements of your ruin.

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SEEDS OF SERMONS ON THE EPISTLE TO TITUS.

No. VIII.

Salvation not of Works but of Grace.*

"BUT AFTER THAT THE KINDNESS AND LOVE OF GOD OUR SAVIOUR TOWARD MAN APPEARED, NOT BY WORKS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH WE HAVE DONE, BUT ACCORDING TO HIS MERCY HE SAVED US, BY THE WASHING OF REGENERATION, AND RENEWING OF THE HOLY GHOST; WHICH HE SHED ON US ABUNDANTLY THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR SAVIOUR; THAT BEING JUSTIFIED BY HIS GRACE, WE SHOULD BE MADE HEIRS ACCORDING TO THE HOPE OF ETERNAL LIFE."—*Titus* iii. 4-7.

THE great subject here is *Salvation*. This includes the restoration of the soul to the knowledge, the image, the fellowship, and the service of the great God. The passage leads us to offer two remarks on the words.

I.—THAT WORKS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS WE CANNOT PERFORM AND THEREFORE THEY CANNOT SAVE US. "*Not by works of (done in) righteousness which we have done* (which we did ourselves)." What are righteous works? Condensely de-

* In order that articles on all the passages in *Titus* may appear consecutively, we give this extract from an early volume of the "*Homilist*."

fined, works inspired ever by supreme sympathy with the supremely good. No other works, whatever their sacred semblance, whatever their popular appreciation, are righteous. Now such righteous works we cannot render in our unrenewed state, because we have lost this affection, and the loss of this is the death and damnation of the soul.

First: *Could we render such works they would save us.* They secure the blessedness of the unfallen angels.

Secondly: *Without rendering such works we cannot be saved.* Moral salvation consists in holiness of character. Character is made up of habits, habits made up of acts, and the acts to be of any worth must be righteous. Another remark suggested is—

II.—THAT REDEMPTIVE MERCY HAS BEEN VOUCHSAFED TO US AND THEREFORE WE MAY BE SAVED. “*According to His mercy He saved us.*” Observe

First: The *special work* of this redemptive mercy. What is the work? (1) Cleansing. “*The washing of regeneration,*” or the “laver of regeneration,” as some render it. Sin is represented as a moral defiler, and

deliverance from sin therefore is a cleansing. (2) Renewal. “*Renewing.*” Sin is represented as death, and deliverance from it is therefore a quickening, a renewal. Observe—

Secondly: The *Divine Administrator* of this redemptive mercy. “*The Holy Ghost.*” No agency but that of God can either morally cleanse or renew. That Divine Agent which of old brooded over the face of the deep can alone morally recreate. Observe—

Thirdly: The *glorious Medium* of this redemptive mercy. “*Through Jesus Christ our Saviour.*” Christ our Saviour is the Medium. Through Him the Spirit came, by Him the Spirit works, in Him the Spirit is abundant. Observe—

Fourthly: The *sublime result* of this redemptive mercy. “*That being justified by His grace we should (might) be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*” The word “*justified*” means to be made right—right in heart, right in life, right in relation to self, the universe, and God. What is it to be made right? To be put in possession of that

spirit of love to God which is the spring of all "*works of righteousness*." "This rectitude (1) Inspires with the highest hope. "*Hope of eternal life*." What a blessing is hope! But the "*hope of eternal life*,"

what hope like this! This rectitude (2) Inaugurates the highest relationship. "*Heirs*." We are "heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ."

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No. IX.

Justification; Faith; Works.

"THAT BEING JUSTIFIED BY HIS GRACE, WE SHOULD BE MADE HEIRS ACCORDING TO THE HOPE OF ETERNAL LIFE. THIS IS A FAITHFUL SAYING, AND THESE THINGS I WILL THAT THOU AFFIRM CONSTANTLY, THAT THEY WHICH HAVE BELIEVED IN GOD MIGHT BE CAREFUL TO MAINTAIN GOOD WORKS. THESE THINGS ARE GOOD AND PROFITABLE UNTO MEN."—*Titus* iii. 7, 8.

THERE are three subjects in these verses of vital interest to man which require to be brought out into prominence and impressed with indelible force.

I.—THE MORAL RECTIFICATION OF THE SOUL. "*Being justified by His grace we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life*." This means, I presume, not that being pronounced right but that being made right.

Forensic justification is an old theological fiction. Those who have held it and who still hold it have ideas of God incongruous and debased. They regard Him as such an one as themselves.* "To be justified" here means, therefore, to be made right. There are three ideas here suggested in relation to this moral rectification of the soul.

First: *All souls in their unrenewed state are unrighteous.*

* On this subject I would earnestly recommend all who are in quest of the truth thoughtfully to peruse the eight lectures, preached before the University of Oxford in 1870, by Rev. Dr. Irons, of Queen's College, London, and Prebendary of St. Paul's.

We do not require any special revelation from God to give us this information. Man's moral wrongness of soul is revealed in every page of human history, is developed in every scene of human life, and is a matter of painful consciousness to every man. We have all erred and strayed from the right like lost sheep.

Secondly: *Restoration to righteousness is the merciful work of God.* "Being justified by His grace"—"His grace," His boundless, sovereign, unmerited love. Who but God can put a morally disordered soul right? To do this is to resuscitate the dead, to roll back the deep flowing tide of human sympathies into a new channel and a new direction, to arrest a wandering planet and plant it in a new orbit. He does it and He alone. He does it by the revelation of His Son, by the dispensations of life, the operations of conscience. "Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man, to bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living."

Thirdly: In this moral rectification of soul *there is the heirship of eternal good.*

"Being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." Eternal life must mean something more than endless existence, for mere endless existence, under certain conditions, might be an object of dread rather than hope. It might mean perfect goodness. Goodness is eternal, for God is eternal. Goodness is blessedness, for God is blessed. A virtuous hope is not hope for happiness, but a hope for perfect goodness. He whose soul is made morally right becomes an heir to all goodness. This heirship is not something added to this inner righteousness. It is in it as the plant is in the seed. Man's heaven is in righteousness of soul and nowhere else. No man can be happy who is merely treated as righteous if he is not righteous. Such treatment, even by God Himself, would only enhance his misery. To be treated as righteous if you are not righteous is an outrage on justice and a revulsion to moral nature. Here we have—

II.—THE ESSENTIAL FOUNDATION OF ALL TRUE FAITH.
"And they which have believed

in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men." The basis of all true faith is faith in God. In *Him*, not in *it*. In *Him*, not in men's *representations* of Him. "He that cometh to God must believe that He is." To believe in Him implies—

First: To believe in what *He is in Himself*—the only absolute existence, without beginning, without succession, without end, who is in all and through all, the All Mighty, the All Wise, the All Good Creator and Sustainer of the Universe. This faith in Him is the most philosophic, the most universal, and the most blessed and ennobling faith. To believe in Him implies—

Secondly: To believe in what *He is to us*—the Father, the Proprietor, and the Life. "Not willing that any should perish." This is the faith that is enjoined upon us everywhere in the Old Testament and the New: not faith in infallible propositions, in infinite personality; not faith in man's ideas of God, but in God Himself as the source of all life, the fountain of all virtue, the standard of all ex-

cellence. "Trust in Him that liveth for ever."

Not in priesthoods, not on creed,
Is the Faith we need, O Lord ;
These, more fragile than the reed,
Can no rest for souls afford.
Human systems, what are they ?
Dreams of erring men at best,
Visions only of a day,
Without substance, without rest.
Firmly fix it, Lord, on Thee,
Strike its roots deep in Thy love ;
Growing ever may it be,
Like the Faith of these above.
Then though earthly things depart,
And the heavens pass away,
Strong in Thee shall rest the heart,
Without fainting or decay.

III.—THE SUPREME PURPOSE OF MORAL EXISTENCE IS TO MAINTAIN GOOD WORKS. What are good works ?

First: *Works that have right motives*. Works that society may consider good, that churches may chant as good are utterly worthless unless they spring from supreme love to the Creator. "Though I give my body to be burned, if I have not love I am nothing." Love is the fulfilling of the law. Good works are—

Secondly: *Works that have a right standard*. It is conceivable that man may have a right motive and yet his work be bad. Was it not something like this with Saul of Tarsus when he was persecuting the saints? We make two re-

marks in relation to these good works.

(1) The maintenance of these works requires strenuous and constant effort. "*I will that thou affirm confidently, to the end that they which have believed in God may be careful to maintain good works.*" There are so many forces within and without us to check and frustrate the maintenance of good works that we require to be constantly on our guard to see that our motives are right. It may be that good works flow from angelic natures as waters from a fountain, as sunbeams from the sun, but it is not so with us. Their light in us is the light of the lamp, and to be clear and useful there must be constant trimming and feeding with fresh oil; for the streams to be pure the fountain must be kept clean. We must watch and pray lest we enter into temptation.

(2) The great work of the Christian ministry is to stimulate this effort. "*I will that thou affirm confidently, to the end that they which have believed God may be careful to maintain good works.*" "This

is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God," &c. In four other texts of Scripture we have "a faithful saying." The first is 1 Tim. i. 15, "That Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners." The second is 1 Tim. iv. 8, 9, "This is a faithful saying, godliness is profitable unto all things." The third is 2 Tim. xi. 11-13, "It is a faithful saying, If we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him." The fourth is, and here the fourth is our text, "This is a faithful saying." What? That God makes men morally right by His grace. This is an undoubted fact. That God is the essential foundation of all true faith. Who can question this? Or that the supreme purpose of moral existence is to maintain good works. Who will gainsay this? Or that all ministers of the Gospel should faithfully and constantly exhort their hearers to maintain good works. These, indeed, are all faithful sayings and should be practically realised by every man.

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Seedlings.

Days of the Christian Year.

Luke vi. 40.

(*Fourth Sunday after Trinity.*)

"THE DISCIPLE IS NOT ABOVE HIS MASTER: BUT EVERY ONE THAT IS PERFECT SHALL BE AS HIS MASTER."

THERE is nothing more *common* than teaching and being taught, and there is nothing more *important*, more serious. Our Lord's words on the influence of the master over the disciple are therefore deserving of our best attention. They may remind us of—

I.—THE COMMUNICABLENESS OF DIVINE WISDOM. Though true that thoughts are often found "too large for utterance" and we have to strive with all patient strenuousness to give them shape and colour so as to present them in their beauty and their worth, it is equally true that the most precious and helpful thoughts, that the saving and sanctifying truth of the Gospel, may be communicated even by the little child. And truth which is fitted to comfort human souls in their most dire distresses, or to strengthen them for their noblest sacrifices,

may be spoken by the lips of the unlearned. There are, indeed, certain truths—mathematical, scientific, historical, philosophical,—which can only be imparted by the few and can only be apprehended by patient intelligence; but the truth "by which we live" is eminently communicable: the simple may pass it on, the unlearned may receive it.

II.—THE LIMITATIONS OF THIS DOCTRINE. It is clear that (1) A man can only convey to another's mind as much as he has received into his own. We cannot give to others what we have not gained for ourselves. And whilst we may easily become familiar with the elementary and essential truths of religion, there are higher and deeper things, and there are finer shades of thought and feeling which it is most desirable to make known, but these we must diligently acquire or we cannot pass them on. The children, the class, the congregation cannot rise above the parent, the teacher, the minister in their knowledge of sacred truth: they are limited by his apprehensions,—*i.e.*, so far as *his* influence is concerned. "The disciple is not above his Master."

It is also clear that (2) A man can only impart to another's spirit the excellency which belongs to his own. The best thing a Master does for a Disciple is not to *convey knowledge*—good as that is,—but to *exert influence*, to inspire with honourable aspiration, to kindle enthusiasm, to communicate the spirit of enquiry, of earnestness, of devotion, of patience. And it is manifest that he can impart no more of this than he possesses: his disciples, when they are perfect,—*i.e.*, when they have been carried as far toward wisdom as he can take them, may reach the height that he has attained, but *he can lead them no farther*. Other influences may enlarge and elevate, but he can do no more. A man's own character must be the measure of his usefulness. The disciple will never be above his master, so far as he owes anything to that master.

III.—THE SPHERES IN WHICH THIS APPLIES,—this doctrine, with this its limitation. It holds good everywhere; but it is emphatically true (1) In the Christian Sanctuary; (2) In the School, whether of a secular or of a sacred character; (3) In the Home.

IV.—THE WISDOM OF THE HUMAN TEACHER. This is (a) To enrich his mind with all the knowledge he can acquire. (b) To cultivate his character, and so to

gain possession of all possible Christian graces. (c) To open his heart to those renewing and refining influences which come from the discipline of the heavenly Father. As God “perfects that which concerns us” who teach and lead, they who are thoroughly instructed and fully affected by us will be guided into the clearer light and be conducted to the nobler heights of heavenly wisdom.

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1 Peter iii. 8-12.

(Fifth Sunday after Trinity.)

“BE YE ALL LIKEMINDED, COMPASSIONATE, LOVING AS BRETHREN, TENDERHEARTED, HUMBLEMINDED: NOT RENDERING EVIL FOR EVIL, OR REVILING FOR REVILING; BUT CONTRARIWISE BLESSING; FOR HEREUNTO WERE YE CALLED, THAT YE SHOULD INHERIT A BLESSING. FOR HE THAT WOULD LOVE LIFE AND SEE GOOD DAYS, LET HIM REFRAIN HIS TONGUE FROM EVIL AND HIS LIPS THAT THEY SPEAK NO GUILDE: AND LET HIM TURN AWAY FROM EVIL, AND DO GOOD; LET HIM SEEK PEACE, AND PURSUE IT. FOR THE EYES OF THE LORD ARE UPON THE RIGHTEOUS, AND HIS EARS UNTO THEIR SUPPLICATION: BUT THE FACE OF THE LORD IS UPON THEM THAT DO EVIL.”

THE apostle had evidently drunk in the spirit of his Lord's great

prayer, "That they all may be one." For now, in simple, homely detail, he is enjoining *unity among Christian people*. We ask and have answered here such questions as—

I.—WHEREIN DOES UNITY BETWEEN CHRISTIAN PEOPLE CONSIST? Let us analyse its spirit that we may discern if we possess it. Leighton suggests that Peter here describes five graces, of which love is the root or stalk, having two on either side—namely, on one side likemindedness and sympathy, on the other, tenderheartedness and humblemindedness. But taking them in Peter's order we note them thus, *likeminded*; not as in our frequent use of the word, similarity in opinion and thought, but in the judgment of affairs and of life, in purpose, and in affection. *Compassionate*; a sorrow with men, a feeling *with* them, rather than imply a feeling *for* them. *Loving as brethren*. True family life being a model for the Church. *Tenderhearted*,—sensitiveness being an essential for true Christian life. *Humble-minded*. The Old Version gives "courtesy," this is the secret of genuine courtesy. Unity involves all these elements of character.

II.—HOW IS UNITY BETWEEN CHRISTIAN PEOPLE MANIFESTED? Whether we take Peter's own

words, or his quotation from the 34th Psalm, we feel the tone of social relationship here indicated is pitched in a far higher key than that which is ordinary and common in the world. *That is*, do not initiate any wrong against your neighbour, be not the beginner of social strife. But *this is*, do not retaliate, do not reciprocate social wrong. "Not rendering evil for evil, nor reviling for reviling,"—the first excluding all actions of revenge; the second excluding all words of resentment. The teaching here is lofty as that of a moral mountain. It is a reminiscence of the Sermon on the Mount.

III.—WHAT IS THE METHOD FOR ATTAINING THIS UNITY? Note (1) *A direction as to the detail of speech*. Dealing with the domain of words we are to refrain (a) from evil, *e.g.*, hasty utterance and (b) false, *i.e.*, deceitful utterance. Then (2) *A deep and wide precept as to the whole of life*. Dealing with the whole domain of life there is a two-fold duty here enjoined. (a) Turn away from evil, (b) Pursue the good.

IV.—WHAT ARE THE MOTIVES FOR DOING ALL AND BEING ALL THAT WILL ENSURE THIS UNITY? 1. *The Christian man is called to inherit blessing*. 2. *The cultivation of the spirit of such unity is*

itself the summum bonum of life.
 3. *Relationship to God is the great determining condition and motive.*

EDITOR.

Matthew x. 8.

(Sixth Sunday after Trinity.)

“HEAL THE SICK.”

THESE words are an important part of that short, condensed, emphatic charge our blessed Lord gave the Twelve on their first mission. We, scarcely less than these Twelve, are surrounded by sick and suffering men, and we, not at all less than the Twelve, have to catch the spirit and fulfil the obligations of this command. Why? Because such care as theirs for the sick is—

I.—A CONFIRMATION OF OUR SINCERITY. To the enquiry were they or are we now mere enthusiasts and visionaries, there are few better replies than downright, practical care for suffering men, and efforts skilful, painstaking, and often menial it may be, to alleviate and to cure human diseases. For the *usefulness* of the Christian miracles is always to be noted. Other religions profess to have their miracles, but they are mainly prodigies to arouse, startle, terrify. Those of Christ and His apostles were to meet common and pressing

human needs. Our mere talk, call we it preaching or what we choose, the world will often think is so much palaver; mere ritual the world will consider so much ceremony. But our distinct, definite, persistent endeavour to cope with man's pains, or poverty, or wrongs, will compel him to see that we really care for his woes. Had the Church through all the centuries and in all the lands sought to live out the spirit of this command of the Great Benefactor, “Heal the sick,” instead of setting so much store on pompous ceremonials, and conflicting controversies, and sectarian differences, and affectation of piety, it would long ago have been the sovereign influence in the world. But we are to obey this command because it is—

II.—AN ILLUSTRATION OF THE COMPLETENESS OF CHRISTIANITY. Care for the sick by Christian teachers is an illustration of the completeness of Christianity, because it indicates (1) Its concern with the whole nature of man. Saving the soul is an inadequate description of the mission of Christianity. It is set on saving the entire man: his home, his relationships, his body, his intellect, his affections, his all. Consider how much of Christ's attention and time and strength were devoted to the hungry, the

diseased, &c. (2) Its care for the individual and not for the mass. We must not be led away by endeavours for "the masses," for "the working classes," and so on. One by one, just as is essential in the care of the sick, the individual conscience is to be reached, the individual heart converted. Not more absurd would be the endeavour of a physician to heal in the mass a multitude of sufferers than is the endeavour to save men in the mass. The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, and the leaven works from atom to atom. We are to obey this command because the effect of such obedience is—

III.—A REVELATION OF THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD. All Christ's miracles, and, perhaps, pre-eminently those of healing, are translucent with the moral element. Their mercy is more than their might. The early disciples were to go forth to reveal their Lord to men, just as His Life revealed the Life of the Eternal God. He is not simply a Founder of a kingdom, or a Teacher of the Truth, but a Healer of men. Hence His representatives must be healers also. Yes, they and we alike have no lower mission, and can have no higher dignity, than to repeat the message of that Life of all lives, to carry its fragrance, to reflect its light, to

echo its music. We are to obey this command because it is—

IV.—AN UNDOUBTED MODE OF SERVING THE CHRIST HIMSELF. As we realise that He is the Head of Humanity, and dwell on all that Headship involves, we feel that there are strange and sacred depths of meaning in His words, "I was *sick* and ye visited Me."

EDITOR.

Mark viii. 1-9.

(*Seventh Sunday after Trinity.*)

"IN THOSE DAYS THE MULTITUDE BEING VERY GREAT, AND HAVING NOTHING TO EAT, JESUS CALLED HIS DISCIPLES UNTO HIM, AND SAITH UNTO THEM, I HAVE COMPASSION ON THE MULTITUDE, BECAUSE THEY HAVE NOW BEEN WITH ME THREE DAYS, AND HAVE NOTHING TO EAT: AND IF I SEND THEM AWAY FASTING TO THEIR OWN HOUSES, THEY WILL FAINT BY THE WAY: FOR DIVERS OF THEM CAME FROM FAR. AND HIS DISCIPLES ANSWERED HIM, FROM WHENCE CAN A MAN SATISFY THESE MEN WITH BREAD HERE IN THE WILDERNESS? AND HE ASKED THEM, HOW MANY LOAVES HAVE YE? AND THEY SAID, SEVEN. AND HE COMMANDED THE PEOPLE TO SIT DOWN ON THE GROUND: AND HE TOOK THE SEVEN LOAVES, AND GAVE THANKS, AND BRAKE, AND GAVE TO HIS DISCIPLES TO SET BEFORE THEM; AND THEY DID SET THEM BEFORE THE PEOPLE. AND THEY HAD A FEW SMALL FISHES: AND HE BLESSED, AND COMMANDED TO SET THEM ALSO BEFORE THEM," &c.

A SIMILAR subject occurs as the Gospel for the fourth Sunday in Lent and the last Sunday in Trinity. This miracle has special features. Describe the scene, &c. Point out the chief differences between this and other miracles very similar to it. Compare Isaac Williams on "Epistles and Gospels," Vol. II. Consider this as giving an illustration of—

I.—MAN'S SPIRITUAL NECESSITY. The multitude "having nothing to eat." No creature altogether independent. Life must be drawn from exterior sources. Constant supplies necessary. The law of all finite existence is *absorb* and *assimilate*. Man experiences a complexity of desires. Man composed of body, soul, and spirit. In each part of his nature he hungers. Natural hunger a type of the hunger of the soul. Man needs (a) *Satisfaction*. The multitude now around our Lord needed their physical natures satisfied. False attempts made to satisfy the mind and soul. The intellect, conscience, and will are restless. (b) *Invigoration*. Multitude faint from want. Power needed for suffering, work, duty.

II.—GOD'S SPIRITUAL PROVISION. Note how *wisely benevolent, compassionate, and considerate* our Lord was towards the fainting multitude. Their wants were supplied. *Freely, sufficiently, and*

suitably provided for. So God deals with us. It is so temporally. Look at the approaching harvest. But more so in reference to our higher natures. God's *compassion, benevolence, and power* seen in the (a) quantity and (b) quality of His spiritual provision. Enough for each individual, whatever his situation and needs. Enough for the world at large. Here the true "Bread." Here the realization of the words "never hunger."

III.—GOD'S SPIRITUAL PROCEDURE. Note here (1) *Great results from small means*. The few loaves and the few fishes. The multitude fed. Illustrations of this crowd upon our minds from every part of God's dealing. No wise man would overlook the value of the smallest means employed for good. God ever uses and blesses the smallest and most despised agency. (2) *Wise economy of means*. No waste. No loud display. Frugality employed. (3) *Human agency dispensing Divine gifts*. The food came first from Christ's hands, but was distributed by human hands. So still in all spiritual work. Christ the food, but we break it, &c. Christ the seed, &c. All we enjoy and distribute is from the "Author of all good things."

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Breviaries.

A Door of Hope.

“THE VALLEY OF ACHOR FOR A DOOR OF HOPE.”—*Hosea* ii. 15.

I.—*Achor, in the natural bountifulness of the valley, a symbol of the joys of life*,—OUR JOYS MAY BE OCCASIONS OF HOPE. The valley was a hint of Canaan, became an open door through which eyes weary of the desert could catch a promise of a goodly land—a land of milk and honey, &c. So it may be with us. (1) *In the joys of natural scenery* there is an inspiration of hope to poet spirits—Wordsworth, Keble, &c. (2) *In temporal mercies* there is an inspiration of hope to grateful hearts. God who has given so much can and will give more. (3) *In religious privileges* there is a door of hope to desert souls. The earthly means of grace are a pledge and an antepast of better. II.—*Achor, in its great historic event, a symbol of the sorrows of life*,—OUR SORROWS MAY BE OCCASIONS OF HOPE. The Septuagint renders the name “door of understanding.” So it was to Israel. They came to know the evil and penalty of the sin of Achan there. The valley of trouble may become to all of us a door of hope whenever the trouble is (1) The trouble of *true penitence*; (2) The trouble of *sanctified adversity or bereavement*; (3) The trouble of *agonising prayer*; (4) The trouble of *spiritual conflict*; (5) The trouble of *sacrificial compassion for others*; (6) The trouble of *the article of our own death*. Such may be doors of a hope that maketh not ashamed. EDITOR.

A Door in Heaven.

“I SAW, AND BEHOLD, A DOOR OPENED IN HEAVEN.”—*Revelation* iv. 1.

THIS figure suggests to me I.—THE NEARNESS OF THE HEAVENLY WORLD. We are at its “door.” Our conceptions of a remote place rather than of a state of being that is realised by those who are no further from us than that they are within the veil, is very erroneous and depressing. Heaven is simply that which is heaved up. An uplifted life. “Heaven lies about us in our infancy.” And so it ever does. We are always on the threshold of the pure, the noble, the blessed. II.—THE POSSIBLE REVELATION OF HEAVEN. It is not merely near and closed against us. It is near and may be known. A door into it may be opened. (1) *The Bible* is such a door. (2) *The death of good men* is such a door. (3) *The life of Christ* is such a door. (4) *Our own best experience* is such a door. EDITOR.

Pulpit Handmaids.

COMMUNION WITH CHRIST.*

THERE is a record in the gospels of a busy Sabbath day which our Lord spent at Capernaum. The day was spent in teaching in the synagogue and healing the sick; and Christ did not give to men, either in teaching or in healing, that which cost Him nothing. He might well be weary when the day was done. But then, when the sun was set, the demands upon Him became the heaviest. The people were afraid to come to Him before, afraid of breaking the law and getting into trouble. But when the sun had sunk beneath the horizon they came. They came in crowds. They brought unto Him all that were sick, and them that were possessed with devils, and all the city was gathered together at the doors. All the sick of Capernaum are there, besieging Him with innumerable requests. And not in vain. He healed many that were sick with divers diseases, and cast out many devils—and, at last, they are gone, and all is still. And what then? “In the morning, a great while before day, He rose up and went out, and departed into a desert place, and there prayed.”

And shall we not, who accept Him as our Exemplar and Guide, follow Him there also? Is it enough for us to be with Him in the crowd? and is there no need for us to be with Him in the solitary place? Are we like Him if a life of active service suffices for us, and is it a matter of little account if we are unlike Him in this respect?

I.—I will venture to say that, if the need for such Divine communion as His example suggests to us could be urged on no other grounds, it might be urged on the ground that He Himself, as apart from what we often call His cause or His kingdom, desires and claims our attention, our thought, our confidences, our fellowship. He left the society of men that He might be alone with His Father. To us He is Himself the interpretation of the Father. Through Him we come to the Father. In Him God is manifest to our minds, shines into our hearts. For us, therefore, to be in communion with the Father is to be in communion with the Son. Our language may not always be theologically exact; but, when we speak of communing with God, we think of Him as we behold Him, and can understand Him in Christ; and when we speak of communing with Christ,

* Address delivered to the Congregational Union of England and Wales, in London, May, 1884.

we think of Him as the Image of the invisible God, and the brightness of His glory. We meet with God in Christ. To be alone with the Father is to be in communion with the Son. And I venture to say that we do not think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think, when we believe that Christ Himself, not only asks for, but desires and values such communion. He seeks not ours only, not ours chiefly, but us. He would hear what we have to say. He would know from our own lips what we feel, what we fear, what we wish. He would see our faces uplifted to His own in trust and affection. We are not hands in a mill, but children in a home. He would have our service, indeed, but He can more easily dispense with our service than with ourselves.

I say, I venture to speak in this strain. One has to summon all one's courage and all one's faith to be able so to speak. It is almost beyond believing that it should be of any account to Christ whether we seek His presence or not. It may be that men do not rate very highly what we have to say or to give. If they do not see us from one end of the year to the other, it will not greatly trouble them. If some day they were to hear we were dead, and that they would see us no more for ever, they would soon recover their composure. They can do without us, and do not want us. Nor do we, perhaps, think much of our own value and importance. We almost despise ourselves at times. We see that men can do without us, and we do not wonder at it. We should wonder if it were otherwise. And so we shrink from saying that Christ desires that we should seek Him and abide in His presence. But such humility, if it be truly humility, is not of faith. What does the life of Christ mean if we may not believe that we are of value in His eyes, and that, not by virtue only of the service we may be able to render to His cause, but simply because of what we are, or may become. What does His life mean, if we may not believe this, and what does His death mean? Why, this *is* the Gospel! "He loved me," says St. Paul, and the apostle would have been the last to say that that love, that personal distinguishing love, was for himself alone. He would rather have said it was made evident that it had been bestowed upon him, the most unworthy, the blasphemer, the persecutor, in order that every man, the lowest, the most sinful, most despairing, might be able to believe in it. He did say something very much like that. But love does not think chiefly of the gains it may make out of those who are the objects of it. That is not like human love as we have known it in its purity and its power, and who will say that it is like the Divine love. Love hungers for the presence of those whom it cherishes.

It is reluctant to part with them for a season. It cannot bear the thought of parting with them for ever. It would hear them speak. It would go with them hand in hand. It would have them keeping watch in the hour of its agony. It yearns over them. It longs to draw them to its embrace. Absalom had not been a good son, but it nearly broke his father's heart when he was told that he would see him no more. His soul had longed to go forth to his son when Absalom had left the court, and he mourned for him every day; but when he heard that he was dead, he was much moved, and he went up to the chamber over the gate and wept, and as he wept thus he said, "Oh my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom; would God I had died for thee! Oh, Absalom, my son, my son!" So David mourned for his wayward son, worse than banished now, who would return no more to his father's house. That passionate cry of distress was the language of human love. But the redeeming love of Christ has done for man what David declares, in the bitterness of his soul, that he would have done had it been possible. He has consented to death on his behalf. And, if that be so, it is the voice of faithlessness only which declares that, whether we seek His face or forget and forsake Him, it is nothing to Him. We do not unduly exalt ourselves when we indulge the hope that our own heart's devotion is acceptable to Christ. But by a contrary course we wrong His love. And the humility which refuses to do this, and which is a denial of that message for human hearts which is written in the blood of the cross, is no honour to Him, and is a reproach to ourselves. But, indeed, there is no thought that should make us so profoundly humble, when we remember what we are, and what we have done and have left undone, as the thought that He cares for us thus. It fills us with shame, while it lifts us into the heavens, and makes our hearts glow with triumph and with joy.

This is one reason, then, and a sufficient reason, for seeking to enter into fellowship with God in Christ, and for guarding the hours of sacred intercourse with a jealous care. Our first duty is to Him; and to be separated from Him, to forget Him more and more, in the multitude of our labours and our anxieties, to lose the fervency of that reverent and adoring love which once the vision of His glory awakened, but which can only be preserved by habits of devout meditation and secret prayer, thus to neglect and forsake Him is to pursue a course which we shall surely have to review some day with inexpressible pain. He is the last Friend to be deserted. He is the last Benefactor to be forgotten. And yet, is it not possible that in our spiritual history and experience, and in our

relations to our unseen Lord, there may take place such a decline of affection, and such a gradual cessation of intercourse, as have to be deplored sometimes in the history of our earthly relationships. There are other domestic tragedies than those that are brought into the courts. There are tragedies where there is no violence, no open rupture, no scandal. And yet they are tragedies. The child has forgotten the heart of the child, and has grown cold to the old home; and the father and the mother say, "Why does he not come?" "Why does he not write?" But he neither comes nor writes. He is busy. He has many friends. He has other things to occupy his mind. Or the wife has learned that the love of early days is failing, and that her presence is no longer a delight. And it may happen that He who has been to us both father and mother, who has been the lover of our souls, who has been nearer to us, and should have been dearer than any beside, whose claim upon us is the strongest of all *home* claims—it may happen that He will see too plainly that He has been forgotten by us, even though we may be busy about what we think to be His work; and that it is a weariness to us to abide in His presence; that we are willing to do many things that are more to our taste, and are happy in the society of congenial friends, but cannot watch with Him one hour.

II.—But I would remind you, next, that it is due to ourselves also, inasmuch as it is essential to the development of the Christian character, and to the health and vigour of the Divine life in the soul, that we should be in communion with Him who is the Fountain of grace, and by whom the true life within us must be quickened and sustained.

It is this inward life which is of principal importance to ourselves, and of chief account in the eyes of God. What we do is something, but what we are is of much more vital moment; and if what we do is not the natural outcome and the true expression of what we are, what moral value is in it? And what we do is not necessarily the true outcome and expression of what we are. It is very possible for us to deceive ourselves here. It is easy to assume that, because the fruit is good, or seems to be good, the tree also must be good, in cases to which the argument of Christ was not intended to apply. It is easy to reason that, because we are doing this and that, because we are carrying on so many good works, because we are supporting so many useful societies and institutions, because we are rendering a service to our generation which is recognised by all witnesses, therefore all must be well with ourselves. But how obviously unsafe it is to take this for granted! What of the motives of our work?

What of the spirit in which it is being done? What of the principles that guide and control our actions? What of the ultimate ends which we are really striving to promote? What of the source from which the energy that men praise in us is proceeding? The works may be to the inward spirit as the blossom or the fruit to the life that is in the tree; but there may be no such connection. Our morality and our practical usefulness may be our religion in act, the true utterance of the soul within; but we may not take it for granted. Why are we so busy? The love of Christ awakening our own love is constraining us, perhaps; but perhaps not. What we do we may be doing not because we see that there is something which ought to be done for love's sake, but because we feel that we must be doing something. It may be it is nothing but the restlessness of our nature which is driving us to work, or the desire not to be outdone by those whom we regard as our rivals, or the thought of the praise we shall receive, or the fear of censure, or the love of prominence, or the pressure of friends, or our fondness for managing and devising—a kind of sportsman's interest in pursuit and achievement without any pretence of moral motive, or concern for ultimate results, or the very necessities of the position we occupy. There are a hundred things to account for our activity in the world or the Church. We may not assume that it is the one right thing, that it is the love of God and man burning within our hearts that accounts for it. But it is the life which is in that love—in the impulses, the energies, the passion and power of it, which is the one supremely important thing. A man's life is not in the multitude of things which he does, any more than in the abundance of things which he possesses. His life is hidden from the world. It is in the state of his heart and his will. It is in the secret movements of his soul, in the direction of his desire, in the nature of his hope, in the habit of his thought, in the quality of his taste, in the bent of his sympathies. In such things the life of a man consists. And how is this love, which is life, a vital energy, deep seated in the soul, penetrating every part, animating every power,—how is it to be quickened, how is it to be sustained, how is it to be made fuller, richer, mightier? Let us admit with thankfulness that it grows and becomes strong by the exercise it finds in the sphere of practical service; but let us remember also that it depends for its nourishment and increase not less on the degree in which we are receiving that grace, that light, that wisdom, that vivifying power which flow into the man who waits upon the Lord, and opens his heart to Him in prayer and communion. He is necessary to us. It is due to ourselves that we

should not forsake Him, or forget Him. We cannot afford to do it. The Divine charm of His presence is the surest safeguard against innumerable spiritual perils that beset us. It is the genial atmosphere in which all fair things will bloom, and all fruitful things will ripen. To be without Him is to be without the sun, without warmth, without a home, without food. It is to languish, and starve, and die. And let us not think, if that should happen, that it will be some compensation, at least, that we have done a good day's work in the world. That is a fragment of comfort at which some may be snatching who have grave misgivings about themselves. They dare not ask what the motive is. They are afraid to examine themselves to see whether they are still in the faith. They evade the inquiry whether their first love has not been lost. They are useful men, at least. They are doing good to others, whatever their own personal state may be, and they will not trouble about themselves so long as they are of service to the world. That is not the true self-forgetfulness. What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own life? What shall anything profit him if he lose his own life? and, without spiritual fellowship with Christ, though he may be useful, as a piece of mechanism is useful till it is worn out, his life must wither and die.

III.—But the work presses so sorely; the calls to active service are so many and so urgent; what leisure is left us for meditation and prayer? There is much work to be done, it is true; but what is our work, and how do we become qualified for it, and what are the conditions of success in it? Is it not possible for us to confound our work with the methods we adopt—the machinery we use in the accomplishment of it? Our work is not preaching, or teaching, or visiting, or organising, or attending in the committee-room, or writing letters. These are but the methods, the instruments whereby the work is to be done. The work itself is something higher. It is the manifestation of Christ by the witness we bear to the truth as it is in Him, and the revelation we make of His Spirit. That is our work as the prophets and the priests of the spiritual dispensation. And how shall a man learn to declare the truth with authority and power, and how shall he learn how to become a blessing to his neighbours and a channel of the heavenly grace? Are not both lessons to be learned in the solitary place wherein Christ reveals Himself to the heart that truly seeks Him. The prophet must first be a seer. We can only adequately declare to others what we ourselves have seen and heard. And God must be our Teacher if we would have a message that has spirit and life in it to carry

to our neighbours. There is a sense in which every man must be able to say, "I have received of the Lord that which also I have made known unto you." We may pick up opinions anywhere, we may find systems and formulas in any of the text-books, we may enter upon our work with a stock of inherited beliefs. But truth, in the fullest sense, is not to be thus easily acquired. The deep things of God are not to be retailed at will in the class-room, or gathered from the writings of the learned. The terms and phrases by which they are described may be thus made familiar to us, but the hidden meaning must dawn upon us, the glory must grow upon us, the beauty must unfold itself to us, the reality and the power must come home to us, as we abide in the holy presence, and wait for the vision which God has to reveal to them that love Him. That we may speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen, we must learn in secret of Him who is the very Truth of God.

But we are called to be priests as well as prophets. Our work is to bring Christ near to men, and to bring men near to Christ. And how is this to be done? Only in one way. Only by becoming ourselves imbued by His Spirit, filled with His love, irradiated by His glory. There have been men whom we have known, men or women, who have been like the angels of God to us. They have brought to us peace in our pain, light in our darkness, strength in our weakness. They have made it easy to us to believe in heaven. We were subdued by their presence, and yet strangely uplifted. It was as though the light of a better world were breaking upon us. It was as though Christ had come back. What was the explanation of it? This was the explanation. Christ had come back. He was there, in them. That spirit which held us captive was His Spirit breathing through them. They had an unction from the Holy One. If we would be the true benefactors of our kind, it will not be wasted time that we shall spend in the presence of our Lord and in fellowship with Him. It is not what we say to men, or what we do for them, that counts for so much. It is what we are to them; it is the love we bear them that will not be wholly concealed; it is the sympathy which glistens in the eye and trembles in the voice; it is the respect which is in all our demeanour and bearing. And where do we learn how to love men, and to feel for them, and to honour them because they are men? Where but by the side of Christ and in the shadow of His cross? These are the lessons which He teaches. This is the spirit which He imparts. It is He who must qualify us for our work, and who alone can make it a success.

Nor are other reasons wanting why we should be often in His company, whatever may be the demands upon our service. It is well for the man who has learned to be at home with God. He has a hiding-place always at hand, a sure refuge from all care and trouble. We know not what may be on the morrow. To-day our work prospers, our friends are kind, our hearts are light; but disappointment may come, failure, desertion, weariness of mind and spirit. It matters not, or it matters little, what may befall, if our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ; but if, when we are forsaken, there is none to whom we can turn; if, when we are weary and worn out, and heart and flesh fail, there are no everlasting arms beneath us into which we can sink, like a tired child, that in their embrace we may rest in peace; if we have been allowing ourselves to be separated from Christ, so that we shall not know where to find Him in our extremity, or shall not recognise Him if He should appear, alas for us then!

BRISTOL.

H. ARNOLD THOMAS, M.A.

“To die! It is the bitterness of life!—the last and sharpest struggle with the tyrannous king. Blessed be Christ, that as the moon which lights our pilgrimage sets in the wilderness, and casts a last pale gleam on the wastes where we have fought and suffered, the sunlight of the higher world flings the glow of its dawning splendour over an Elim, brighter, softer, more blessed than even our most daring dreams. And there the victorious sufferers, ‘having conquered the sharpness of death,’ are resting encamped by the waters; they share the triumphs of courage and patience, and wait till we join them, to seek with us the Jerusalem of the skies.”—*Rev. J. Baldwin Brown.*

Suggestions for Science Parables.

THE GARDEN.

The Making of a Flower.—The Growth of a Soul.

"How much goes to the *making of one little flower*—how important each current of every leaf is, how necessary every shade of colour to its perfection; and I see in it *the symbol of the making of a soul*, of the need there is for the unfolding of every natural beauty and for the ripening of every grace; it may compel infinite labour, it may take millions of years to make one soul perfect,—the mills of the gods grind slowly,—but the work, we may be sure, will have no flaw in it when the time is complete."

Hyacinth Bulbs.—The Discipline of Obscurity.

"PERHAPS there are times when the soul may need a certain twilight and doubtfulness for its growth, just as we *put hyacinth bulbs into the dark* for their roots to grow downwards before we let them feel the sunshine and begin to stretch up their stems and blooms to the sun. You know what feeble flowers a hyacinth bulb has when brought to the light too soon, before it has struck down long fibres into the water. May it not be the souls which are meant to flower most gloriously towards God, have to grope about a long time in doubt and uncertainty? Would it be well for them to turn despairing and leave off growing roots of patience and hope and self knowledge, to conclude that there is no light because they have not been lifted up into it."

The Shedding of Leaves.—Self-sacrifice and Heavenly Hope.

"I LIKE to look at the little rhododendron trees—the already fully formed buds, next year's flowers getting ready to grow, showing through the old leaves that will fall off before their beauty begins. The leaves have nursed the future flowers all the year, and they will *die when the flowers are ready to bloom*, just as our bodies are ready to flower in the spiritual world. . . . I believe every single leaf has a bud in its charge which it shelters all the summer, and then it dies to give its nursling air and space to grow in. Thus the law of sacrifice and hope is read to us by every autumn leaf that the wind blows in our faces."

T. B. K.

Selected Acorns from Stalwart Oaks.

“The smallest living *acorn* is fit to be the parent of *oak-trees* without end.”
—*Carlyle*.

CONDESCENSION.—“The Simoon of the desert is not the only evil that can be *avoided by stooping*.”—*Helps*.

CHILDHOOD'S PERILS.—“Ovid gives a pathetic picture of the new-born whose first day was its last, exposed to wild beasts; and describes those who flit about in the night seeking for these unfortunate little creatures for the *worst purposes*. Pliny speaks coolly of those who hunt for the brains and marrow of infants, probably for superstitious or medicinal purposes.”—*Brace*.

RELIGION WITHOUT MORALITY.—“A religion without morality soon becomes an immoral religion; the religious emotions and sanctions, *deprived of ethical quality and control*, become the most debased and pernicious forces that can act within the spirit of man.”—*Fairbairn*.

SINGLENESSE OF AIM.—“The golden calf of *self-love*, however curiously carved, was not their Deity; but the invisible goodness which alone is man's reasonable service. . . . The wedge will rend the rocks, but its edge must be sharp and single, if it be double, the wedge is bruised in pieces and will rend nothing.”—*Carlyle*.

THE POWER OF THE PULPIT.—“The pulpit is especially *the throne of modern eloquence*. There it is that speech is summoned to realize the fabled wonders of the Orphean lyre. The preacher has no control over the will of his audience other than the influence of his discourse. Yet as the ambassador of Christ it is his great and awful duty to call sinners to repentance.”—*John Quincey Adams*.

THE CHERUBIM OF WORSHIP.

“Peace, Love! the cherubim that twine
Their spread wings o'er devotion's shrine,
Prayers sound, in vain, and temples shine
Where they are not.
The heart alone can make divine
Religion's spot.”—*Campbell*.

Reviews.

HOMILISTIC LIBRARY, VOL. IV. THE BOOK OF JOB. By Rev. DAVID THOMAS, D.D. London: Smith and Elder, Waterloo Place.

We are glad to receive this the fourth volume of the Homilistic Library, which we are told will, when completed, consist of a reproduction of all Dr. Thomas' works, carefully revised and enlarged, in a uniform edition, and all compared with the conclusions of the most eminent and modern Biblical scholars and authorities. The works, we understand, will appear in different series, each series consisting of three volumes.

Two editions of this work on Job—which has received the highest commendations of some of the leading scholars and thinkers of the age—have been exhausted. This, the third edition, appears with the enormous advantage of a complete *Topical Index* of seventeen pages of small type, in which every leading topic of thought in the book is indicated. Many will be glad that the author has promised to supply this work to ministers, which is published at 10/6, for 7/6, direct from his residence, post free. Concerning the Book of Job, *Carlyle* has said, "I call that book, apart from all theories about it, one of the greatest things ever written with pen. There is nothing written, I think, either in the Bible or out of it, equal to it."

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE ENGLISH COMMONWEALTH. By J. ALLANSON PICTON, M.A., M.P. London: Alexander and Shepherd, Castle Street, Holborn.

This little volume comprises Six Lectures on such Subjects as—"Treason and Loyalty—The Limits of Moral Force—The Limits of Physical Force—The Sources of Popular Enthusiasm—Republicanism." "The purpose of these Lectures," says the author, "has been to bring home to the members of the class now rising into power some of the lessons in political ethics derivable from a study of the Commonwealth period. They can hardly, therefore, be considered historical lectures, except so far as this, that they take their text from the story of our own country." Few men are more qualified by natural talent, acquired intelligence, and honest purpose, than the author of this book, to discuss the subjects it treats of. We recommend the little volume heartily to the study of young men, for there are national evils now that cry for a Cromwellian spirit if the Commonwealth is to prosper.

THE BOOK OF ENOCH THE PROPHET. Translated by the late RICHARD LAURENCE, LL.D. London: Kegan Paul and Co., 1, Paternoster Square.

This is a translation of an Ethiopic MS. in the Bodleian Library. The Scriptures give the impression not only that there was a book called the Book of Enoch, but that the book had high authority, yet it is little known. This is an interesting production, and will do much towards popularising the knowledge which at present none but a few scholars possess.

NOTES ON THE CANONS OF THE FIRST FOUR GENERAL COUNCILS. By WILLIAM BRIGHT, D.D., Canon of Christchurch. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

The students of Church History who need a concise, clear, and withal compendious view the Councils of Nicæa, Constantinople, Ephesus, and Chalcedon, cannot do better than possess themselves of this volume of Canon Bright's. Though intended for younger students, there are few to whom it will not be welcome.

HOURS WITH THE BIBLE, or the Scriptures in the Light of Modern Discovery and Knowledge. From the Exile to Malachi, with the Contemporary Prophets. By CUNNINGHAM GEIKIE, D.D. London: Hodder and Stoughton, Paternoster Row.

This last volume well completes Dr. Geikie's invaluable series on the Old Testament, to which we have several times called our readers' notice. In his preface he wisely says, "The light thrown on writings often so difficult as they stand in our Bibles, by introducing them in their historical connection, must be evident. They become again what they originally were—the pulpit-literature of the day in which they were spoken, and, as such, at once reflect light on the sacred narrative and are illustrated by it." We can hardly conceive of a more interesting and useful companion to the Old Testament than this. We keenly anticipate his series on the New Testament.

POSITIVE ASPECTS OF UNITARIAN CHRISTIANITY. Ten Lectures, delivered by various Ministers, with a Preface by Rev. JAMES MARTINEAU, D.D., LL.D. London: Office of the Association, 37, Norfolk Street.

No system can live on mere negations. If to outside observers Unitarianism has seemed very largely devoted to negation and protest

rather than to positive teaching, it has been perhaps for lack of such volumes as this, or such lectures as are herein contained ; and it is well the lack should be supplied. For though, as we read the other day, with pain and amazement, a leading Unitarian minister, Mr. Suffield, urged on the Association of that body that, if too far to attend Unitarian chapels, it would be well that their young people should be discouraged from attending other places of worship, we have no sympathy with such narrowness either as to sanctuaries or literature. Many of these ten lectures, on such topics as "The Affirmation of God," "Worship," "Prayer," "The Bible," "The Future Life," are by men whose intelligence and devoutness challenge our best attention. Indeed, any work that Dr. Martineau touches will be hailed by the best men of all churches.

THE LIGHT OF LIFE. Addresses to Young Men. By DUNCAN M. WEST.
London : Simpkin, Marshall and Co.

Here are some twenty addresses by an unusually earnest and intelligent layman, who has for years been one of the appreciative readers of and occasionally a valued contributor to *The Homilist*. Mr. Duncan West is evidently well fitted for the mission to the young men of Glasgow that he has undertaken, and of which these addresses are but one development. He is a man of wide observation, of large sympathies, of incisive and glowing style, and withal of unwavering loyalty to truth. Many who emulate his noble mission would do well to study this book as an indication of the way to success in their sacred ambition. The preliminary chapter gives some valuable hints, especially about a Boys' Christian Association, to which we call especial attention.

LIGHT FROM THE OLD LAMP. Homespun Homilies. By J. JACKSON WRAY.
London : James Nisbet and Co., Berners Street.

The sermons in this volume, some thirty in number, and on a great variety of subjects, are well called by their preacher "Homespun Homilies." This is not merely a characterisation but a recommendation of them. For there are multitudes of hearers, specially in great city congregations, such as that to which we understand Mr. Jackson Wray ministers, who need just such clear, bright, homely and withal always healthy teaching as these sermons contain. If there is not much here to tax thought, there is nothing here to tire. The vivid allusions, the frequent quotations, the abundant

illustrations, all lend themselves readily to the enforcement of the lessons of virtue, of hope, of courage, which they are intended to teach. Many young ministers, whose lot is thrown among city-folk, would get stimulus and suggestion for their difficult work from a perusal of these pages.

THE SPIRIT OF CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES. Address by the Rev. D. JACKSON HAMILTON, Chairman of the Annual Conference of Scottish Congregationalists. Glasgow : Morison Brothers.

The healthy tone of this stimulating address is heard in its every sentence. For there is the ring of that true independence without which Independent Churches are simply so many satires on their name; and there is at the same time that music of catholicity, without which any Church lacks one of its essential and elemental characteristics. Quoting a couplet from Goethe—

“Divide and rule the politician cries;
Unite and lead, is watchword of the wise,”

Mr. Hamilton focalises his address into a practical appeal to the Scottish Congregational Churches to unite with The Evangelical Union. Such an amalgamation seems to us a consummation devoutly to be wished for, and we bid every effort in that direction a hearty God speed. Dr. Morison's honoured name and influence, which is already the property of one of these Communion, would be a possession which the Congregationalists might well rejoice to make their own.

IN MEMORIAM REV. H. H. DOBNEY. An Address by the Rev. HENRY SIMON. London : Wm. Isbister, 56, Ludgate Hill.

Few more sterling teachers have wrought out their life-work this half century than Henry Dobney, of Maidstone. A man of equal genius, and courage, and devotion, he found himself often caluminated and misunderstood. But the current of theological thought that such men as he led is now so strong and full that his dearest convictions about God, and nature, and human destiny are now the common opinions of multitudes of men. Mr. Simon's funeral address is the appropriate utterance of an intellectual and spiritual kinsman. Some of its passages are freighted with his own or others' grateful tributes as to signal service rendered by Mr. Dobney. One of the foremost men in the Church of England wrote to him some

years ago "to thank him for the help he had often been to a sin-laden man." Very tenderly, and from our knowledge of Mr. Dobney we should judge very truly, does Mr. Simon say of him, after quoting what he had said about Paul's love to Christ, "This was the love or loves of God which was shed abroad in our friend's heart by the Holy Ghost. It elevated all that was natural and true within him to a Divine plane. It made Christ's yoke to him easy, and His burden light. It invested all things with a beauty which helped him to feel he was dwelling in the house of the Lord all the days of his life—that he was beholding the beauty of the Lord and was enquiring in His temple. It gave him power to idealise humanity, to see a brighter angel than ever Michael Angelo saw in the block of marble, in men who could not be otherwise described than as blocks of humanity. It gave him "the larger hope" for this world, about which, however, he did not dogmatise—his feeling was that there were not data enough for that—and it caused him to blend into sympathy with The Christ who gave Himself for the lost and perishing."

THE SURVIVAL OF THE SOUL IN DEATH. By SILAS HENN. London: Primitive Methodist Book Room, Sutton Street.

We are glad to welcome this production of this vigorous and suggestive writer with the same cordial greeting that the *Homilist* accorded to former works of his. With some details of the views of this *brochure* we are not in agreement, though we hold firmly by its main conception. For the rest we are disposed to let our views be expressed by a forthcoming Leading Homily from a wide-minded clergyman who has already contributed to our pages.

THE CHRISTIAN VIEW OF WINE AND STRONG DRINK. A Sermon by Rev. PALMER G. GRENVILLE, LL.B. Stroud: *Stroud Journal* Office.

In this Sermon the Temperance position is temperately stated. By this we do not imply that it is not forcibly stated, for to us the intemperance of many Temperance advocates has been a cause of weakness in enforcing their cause which we have often deplored. Mr. Grenville has produced a missive which we believe will do good service in the ranks of thoughtful Christian people who have not yet seen their way to enrol under the Total Abstinence flag in that crusade with Drunkenness, in which every religious Englishman should at once take some earnest part.

THE SERVANT OF THE LORD ; A Sermon after the death of LINDSEY WILLIAM WINTERBOTHAM, preached in Bedford Street Chapel, Stroud, by REV. PALMER G. GRENVILLE, LL.B. *Stroud Journal Office.*

An honest, intelligent, and heartfelt, and therefore an eloquent, tribute to the memory of one of those devoted Christian laymen whose philanthropic works are the glory of the public life, and whose geniality, uprightness and hospitality are the beauty of the home-life of England. The lessons of a life of rare usefulness are judiciously drawn and tenderly enforced in this Sermon.

THE NEW TUNE BOOK FOR SPECIAL HYMNS. By F. C. MAKER. London : F. Pitman, Paternoster Row.

As long as the spirit of devotion is alive in the Church, and there are men of poetic soul to utter that devotion there will be new hymns, and as long as there are new hymns there will be, and there ought to be, new tunes. These by Mr. Maker are well wedded to the hymns for which he has composed them. Many have already become favourites in some congregations and will grow widely popular where refined, and correct, and, at the same time, bright and rich music is valued. Worship is the crown of our public services, and whatever contributes to it is of great worth to our churches.

NOTES AND MEDITATIONS ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN. By R. E. Part II. Chapters iii., iv London : G. Morrish, Paternoster Square. Price Threepence.

The title accurately describes this little work. No Gospel so naturally lends itself to "meditations" as that of John, and these meditations are fresh, devout, sympathetic. They are not controversial in spirit, and hence, though ever and anon we differ from some views that are enunciated, we are unwilling to enter into controversy. They are poor readers who only enjoy that with which they agree.



The
Leading Homily.

GOD—THE FATHER.

“AND HE AROSE, AND CAME TO HIS FATHER. BUT WHEN HE WAS YET A GREAT WAY OFF, HIS FATHER SAW HIM, AND HAD COMPASSION, AND RAN, AND FELL ON HIS NECK, AND KISSED HIM. AND THE SON SAID UNTO HIM, FATHER, I HAVE SINNED AGAINST HEAVEN, AND IN THY SIGHT, AND AM NO MORE WORTHY TO BE CALLED THY SON. BUT THE FATHER SAID TO HIS SERVANTS, BRING FORTH THE BEST ROBE, AND PUT IT ON HIM; AND PUT A RING ON HIS HAND, AND SHOES ON HIS FEET: AND BRING HITHER THE FATTED CALF, AND KILL IT; AND LET US EAT, AND BE MERRY: FOR THIS MY SON WAS DEAD, AND IS ALIVE AGAIN; HE WAS LOST, AND IS FOUND. AND THEY BEGAN TO BE MERRY.”—*Luke xv. 20-24.*

WE have often seen at the close of a dark and stormy day, in which the clouds had swept across the sky and the rain had descended and the wind been wild, the sun suddenly burst forth at his setting, and bathe hill and valley, stream and meadow with his glory, and then with the clouds all gone from the sky and amidst the songs of happy birds the day has closed. That is like the career of the prodigal. The day of his life in the far country had been wild and desolate, with black storm-clouds flying overhead, but the evening was serene and calm, full of beauty and gladness.

As the prodigal lifts himself up amidst his degradation and grasps his staff and stands ready to set out on his homeward journey, there is a certain nobleness in him. He is ashamed of himself, and it is a noble shame. It is not a shame that will keep him from going back to his father just as he is, and confessing that he has done wrong. It is not the shame that springs from pride, which makes one shrink from acknowledging his sin. There are many who, having gone astray into dissipation and vice, sinking down from one depth to another, remain where they have fallen rather than openly and frankly repent. They would go back to God and duty and human love, and make a new start in life, if they could go back without pain or inconvenience, and without their disgrace being known. But they are ashamed to retrace their steps in rags, and with the confession on their lips, "Father, I have sinned." That is the shame which springs from pride, and not a true penitential shame. The prodigal has no such false shame as that. He knows that he has done wrong, and he is ready to confess it, and to bear the consequences of it. As he sat in the lonely fields, thinking over his conduct, after he came to himself, he made up a simple, frank acknowledgment of his guilt, which he means to speak out bravely and straightforwardly when he gets home. "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants." An honest, earnest confession this. No palliation or guises does he resort to. He does not devise any excuse for his wicked profligate course, by which he may avoid the just condemnation of his father. He does not lay the blame upon circumstances, or companionships, or the delusiveness of the far country. But his simple cry is, "Father, I have sinned." Not a word does he speak of his distress and sufferings, in order to excite pity and mercy. He is content to be even as a servant, if only he may be once more in the home. This is true repentance. It does not hide the wicked past beneath the veil of shallow excuses. It does not seek chiefly to escape punishment, as if that were the worst thing that could befall a man. It does not bargain with God, but goes to Him, trusting in His goodness, content to be even the least among His people. A man's re-

pentance may be mean and selfish, or it may be noble and great; and according as it is the one or the other, will the Divine reception and forgiveness be felt abundantly or imperfectly. Many a man has never realised the full shining of God's grace, because he has not had a large and profound repentance.

Turn now to the father. Often at morning and evening has the father, whose heart has never given up his son, looked in the direction which the son took, hoping one day to see him return. At last he descries afar off a traveller in the road. His heart beats quick. One long, steadfast gaze, with those eyes of love which see everywhere and pierce everything, and he recognises the form—it is the wanderer coming home. He is a pitiable object; wayworn and woe-begone, covered with the dust of the way, sunken and famished, but through all that the father sees who it is. Painfully, for memory is busy, recalling the happy home-scenes of the past, and the sad hour of his lawlessness when he broke away from home; sorrowfully, for he sees what agony he has caused the heart of his father; timidly, for he knows he is no more worthy to cross the old familiar threshold; slowly, for he is weary and hungry with long fasting and toilsome journeying—the prodigal comes on. His coming is too tardy for the impatient heart of the father. He does not hold himself back with a dignified composure, awaiting the advance of the son. He does not leave him to come alone to the door, to crouch low in abject humiliation, while the balance is struck between mercy and severity. No! But with that aged frame of his, yet with the strength which sudden impulse gives, he runs to meet the youth, and ere the son can speak he has him in his arms and folds him to his bosom and kisses him. And lifting up his weary eyes, feeling his wrong doing more now than ever, the prodigal sobs out his confession, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." There he stops. One look into the father's face tells him that he need say no more, that he must say no more. It would only give the father pain were he to ask to be made a servant. It would be casting a doubt upon the father's love and the reality of his welcome.

In this picture of an ideal father—one who is full of sorrow over the loss of his son, watching for his return, running to meet him while he is still afar off, setting a kiss of forgiveness on his brow—Christ gives us a representation of God. God is like that. At another time Christ said, “If ye being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things” to you. Human fatherhood and motherhood are only the dim and imperfect likeness of the Divine fatherhood and motherhood. All human love flows from the Divine heart. It is in God before it is in us. It is in us because it is in God. Whatever is beautiful and tender and true in human nature points upward to heaven, for it has all come down from heaven. All our words of sympathy and pardon are but the faint echoes of the everlasting sympathy and pardon that God feels as the Father of us all. The old Hebrew psalmists and prophets had glimpses of this truth. To them it was revealed that “The Lord looseth the prisoners”: “The Lord openeth the eyes of the blind”: “The Lord defendeth the fatherless and widow”: “The Lord raiseth up them that be bowed down”: “Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him”: “As far as the east is from the west, so far doth He remove our transgressions from us.” The goodness of God was a truth which men in Old Testament times had visions of. Christ confirms the ancient revelation and adds to it. “All the light of sacred story,” and besides that a clearer and more glorious light shines in the face of Jesus Christ.

Consider some of the thoughts which the picture that Christ has given in the parable teaches us.

I.—THE DIVINE FORGIVENESS IS AWAITING HUMAN REPENTANCE.

When the son came back, he had not to stand at the door and knock, waiting till the father should come to him. It was the father who was awaiting the son’s repentance, not the son who had to await the father’s forgiveness. This is the way that God forgives—not reluctantly, tardily, but readily, freely. God does not bestow His mercy as a miser parts with his money, slowly, grudgingly, and only when he must. “God delighteth in mercy.”

When it is noon how long must a man wait for the sun to rise? It has risen already and is flooding the world with its light and heat. And when a man repents of his wrong life, he has not to wait for the Divine mercy to arise and shine upon him, it is already shining and filling the atmosphere, if he will believe it. It is God who waits for man, not man who waits for God. It is God who stands knocking at the door of the human heart, not man who stands knocking at the door of the Divine heart. Indeed God is beforehand with His mercy. He even comes to meet man, while he is yet a great way off, to help him in his repentance. Soon as the resolution is once formed, "I will arise," although it may be only feeble, yet God sees it and will strengthen it. He will not smite it down with cold scorn because of its feebleness and imperfection; rather he will foster it, and by His gentleness make it great. Although the reed be bruised, and can as yet give forth no true note of music, still He will not crush it as a worthless thing, but He will touch it tenderly and skilfully, until its bruise be healed and its harmony be perfect. Although the flax be only smoking, yet He will not extinguish it as a vain, hopeless spark, but He will fan it into a bright, cheerful, leaping fire. The smallest beginning of good in man is graciously welcomed and encouraged by God.

II.—THE DIVINE FORGIVENESS IS AS LARGE AS HUMAN SIN.

The prodigal represents the worst type of sinners. He was not lost as the sheep was lost, going astray through sheer thoughtlessness, simply because there happened to be a gap in the fence. He was not lost as the piece of money was lost, rolling away into the darkness and dust because it could not help itself. He was lost intentionally and voluntarily. He had good opportunities, good influences, good teachings, good examples, and he wasted all these. He might have grown up in the father's home and been a son, but he became restless and broke away into a life of exile. The "far country" lay away on the horizon, full of allurements and charm, and he longed to see its sights and hear its sounds and enjoy its pleasures. Thither he was resolved to go. And in that strange land he had lived riotously, wasting his patrimony,

mixing with evil companions, and at last he despised his birth-right and degraded himself into a swineherd. This represents the darkest type of a sinful life. And yet he is forgiven, and that not hesitatingly, partially, but fully and at once.

And Christ means us to understand that this is a picture of God's forgiveness. It is a great ocean in which the worst sin is lost for ever. The waters of love flow over it and hide it out of sight and even out of memory. It is this fulness of God's forgiveness that man wants in order that his repentance may be deepened into a new life. The more a man sees of God's love, the more does he see the evil of sin and the deeper is his hatred of it. The repentance which follows the sense of God's mercy is something far truer than that which precedes the sense of pardon; only it does not manifest itself so much in tears and sorrow, as in an earnest endeavour after newness of life and character. The fulness of God's forgiveness also gives inspiration for the conflict and toil of becoming a new creature. It is a stern task. There is so much to undo and so much to do; so much to leave behind and so much to reach; so much to unlearn and so much to learn, that without the strength that comes from the joy of God's love the work would never be accomplished. The elder brother ought not to cavil at the largeness of the father's forgiveness of the prodigal; he needs it all as an inspiration in the new life to which he has returned.

III.—MAN'S REPENTANCE IS A SOURCE OF JOY TO GOD.

It were hard to say in whose heart there is the greater joy, the son's heart or the father's. The banquet is not for the son's happiness alone, it is also the expression of the father's gladness. Man is dear to God. He is His child. Until man be as a child in the Father's home the Father is not at rest. The perfection of God does not make Him able to be blessed without man's love. That would be but the perfection of a Deity without moral character. He might have wisdom, power, unchangeableness, but He would lack that which is greater than all—goodness. God is one who "is love"—perfect love, and, therefore, the very perfection of His nature makes Him need man's love and makes

Him welcome it. God is not merely the Infinite Mind, or the Infinite Will, or the Infinite Might, but He is the Infinite Heart. "I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of God over one sinner that repenteth."

This is the revelation that the world wants. It is sad and weak and crushed and dying because it does not know and believe in God the Father. Age after age God has been misunderstood. He has been thought of as one who is stern, readier to punish than to pardon, with thunder-bolts of vengeance in His hand; as one who looked out upon this poor world only to mark iniquity, to exact sacrifices, to strike awe and terror into human hearts and consciences; as one who loved only the good and had but hatred and wrath for the wicked, and who would find His satisfaction in punishing countless generations of men for ever. So has He been unfolded, and so have trembling souls regarded Him. The unbelief of man in God is not unbelief in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, but unbelief in the God who is the dark creation of paganism and mediæval priestism. The human heart cannot in reality believe in a God who is not love; it must not, it shall not; God Himself guards it against that. He will not let His child believe a lie; mistake another being for Himself. Hence the widespread revolt against many of the ideas of the past. It is a revolt that is inspired of Heaven. As the glory of the blessed God, revealed by Christ, shines forth and men see it, they will believe in Him and be at rest in His home.

WOODFORD.

THOMAS HAMMOND.



THE LAW OF CIRCULARITY.—"Life is a ceaseless vortex, a perpetual whirlpool, from the beginning to the ending, and from the ending to the beginning. Every death is a new birth, every grave a cradle. . . . There is nothing fixed or final in the heavens; all things are passing through cycles of decay or revivification, and these alternations hasten on the final consummation of all things."—HUGH MACMILLAN.

Germs of Thought.

God's Fourfold Relationship.

"THE GOD OF THE WHOLE EARTH."—*Isaiah* liv. 5.

THERE are four great names by which Almighty God is most commonly called in Christendom—Creator, King, Judge, Father. The first and last, Creator and Father, are probably absolute and literal descriptions of Him; there is no other Creator but He, and all parentage but shadows the great fact of His Fatherhood. The other two names, King and Judge, are figurative and illustrative only. But all four are revealed names; authorised names; names given by God Himself to the yearning, importunate enquiries of men who, like wrestling Jacob, cry to Him, "Tell me, I pray Thee, Thy name."

We must know God by more than His names if we are in any true sense to know Him; we must realise His Presence; be quickened by His Life; the Presence everywhere revealed; the Life everywhere felt.

Yet on a consideration of each of His names—especially of the four we have just mentioned, and of the relationship they indicate He holds—we may find some interpretation of what is meant by the declaration that He is "the God of the whole earth."

I.—He is the God as being the CREATOR of the whole earth. The earth would not have come into existence, and would not *be* to-day, but for the will, the power, the goodness of God. In the architecture of the whole earth there is God's design; in the structure there is God's might; in both there is God's love. By "the whole earth," it is clear from the context that *Isaiah* is intending the multitudes of its human inhabitants. But we widen his meaning. We recall the familiar passage of St. Augustine in his "Confessions," explaining why nature was so

beautiful by telling how nature had led him up to God. "I asked the *earth* and it said, 'I am not He,'—and all that is upon it made the same confession. I asked the *sea* and the depths and the creeping things that have life, and they answered, 'We are not thy God; look thou above us.' I asked the *breezes* and the gales, and the whole air with its inhabitants said to me, 'I am not God.' I asked the *heaven*, the sun, the moon, the stars, they too said, 'We are not the God whom thou seekest.' And I said to all the creatures that surround the doors of my fleshly senses, 'Ye have said to me of my God that ye are not He; tell me somewhat of Him.' And with a great voice they exclaimed, 'He made us.'" So might we paraphrase these fine words of Augustine, and asking all diversities of men,—men of every colour, clime, experience, age,—we should hear their conscious, or alas often unconscious and unwilling testimony, "We are His workmanship; it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves."

You have some shelves in your libraries where all the books are by one author; you have visited art galleries where all the pictures were by one painter. Such a book-shelf, such a gallery, is a hint of what is meant by the one Creator of all things being "the God of the whole earth."

II.—He is the God as being the KING of the whole earth. Kingship is often a very conventional conception; royalty often a very conventional idea. Back of it all, in essential reality, is intended, not pomp and splendour, not rank and arbitrary authority, but genuine *supremacy*, the supremacy that must govern, that ought to control, and the glory that is inherent in such supremacy. We do not find much help to understanding the government of God in the kings and queens whose empire is but as an inch, whose reign an hour. Christ's kingship, and not Cæsar's, nor Alexander's, nor Solomon's, nor Pharoah's, is the true specimen of monarchy, of Divine sovereignty. He is Lord of a moral dominion, King of a spiritual empire, and yet, when He willed it, His sceptre controlled material nature, multiplying the handful of loaves and fishes into a sudden harvest by a touch, and calming tempestuous winds and waves by a word. In His infinite sovereignty over moral and material affairs, God as King

is "God of the whole earth." Often His splendours are veiled, and often His power is put forth like the slow moving of an almighty hand inspired by a heart of infinite patience. But He is King of all; He ever and everywhere reigns. In the affairs of homes, and institutions, and nations, and individual lives it may be that—

"God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform:
He plants His footsteps on the sea
And rides upon the storm."

Two famous Welsh preachers of last century were bidding each other "good-night" on the evening before a day of special service and sermons, and the one said to the other, "I hope we shall have the Master's face to-morrow." "Yes, indeed," said the other, "so do I hope, but if not, let us do our best to speak well of Him behind His back." You catch his meaning I am sure. He meant that if the services were not bright; if there was not the conscious enjoyment of Christ's presence, as sometimes when hearts are readily melted by the preaching of His Gospel, and congregations enter with rapture into the singing of His praise,—they must still speak well of Him. And so it ever is with those who are loyal to the King of the whole earth. We hope for the tokens of His gracious reign, the indications that He is subduing His enemies under Him, and establishing His kingdom of truth and righteousness and peace. We long to have His *face* shining upon us (in Madagascar?—yes—in our own too often darkened hearts), but if we do not have His *face*, if we have perplexity, adversity, confusion, "let us do our best to speak well of Him behind His back."

III.—He is the God as being the JUDGE of the whole earth. A world in which there is iniquity demands a Judge. Of an unfallen and unsinning universe there need have been no Judge, though there were Creator, Father, and even King. But the moral necessities of a world like this, and of lives such as we are living, cry out for a Judge. Nay, the necessities of God's own righteous nature compel Him to be a Judge. As His love compels Him to be the Father of all, and His pity compels Him to be the

Friend of the needy, so His righteousness compels Him to be the Judge of wronged and wrong-doing humanity. The whole earth's God must be a universal Judge; between savage tribes like those now butchering each other in Africa, between nations like France and Madagascar, between man and man, and between man and law, the God of all must be the supreme Judge. Unerring in His all-pervading knowledge, righteous in His infinite inspiration, infallible in His verdicts, "shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

When in the last years of the existence of slavery in the United States, the eloquent and renowned Frederic Douglass was once in a speech describing the wrongs and cruelties that he as a slave had long endured, and that thousands of his race were still enduring under the system that has been called "the sum of all villainies," he became so intensely excited, so overborne with emotion that he was carried away in a torrent of indignation and invective that was almost wild with its passion. An aged negress rose in the midst of the crowd of agitated hearers, and with a voice, not loud, but deep and strong, whose effect was electric, she appealed, "Frederic, is God *dead*?" Her words may sometimes be on our lips, and oftener linger in our hearts, as we are brought face to face with what seems often to us the cruel confusion of human affairs—"Is God dead?"

IV.—He is the God as being the FATHER of the whole earth. Here, indeed, is the central thought of this declaration—So He shall be the God, that is the Good One, the Loving One of the whole earth. It is not alone because all men must confront His judgment seat, all nations bow before His throne, or even because all creation proceeds from Him as from the Fountain of existence; it is because all are in His heart, and His heart embraces all; in a word, because He is Father, that He shall be called "God of the whole earth." Judges and kings too often caricature rather than reveal God; even the highest and noblest type of fathers, amid a million others who fail completely, only tell of His Fatherhood as one leaf tells of a forest, one wavelet of the sea, one ray of the sun. The heart of humanity cries, "Show us the Father and it sufficeth us," and Jesus, by the words of His lips and by the

works of His hands,—yet more exceedingly by His cross, by His character, and by His Spirit is ever revealing the Father. Blessed are they who have the vision; the pure in heart who see God. After a long continued campaign when the Greeks would return to their country and knew not the way, in their earnest, eager journeyings they rounded a hill-top, from which they suddenly discerned the blue waters of the ocean that told them where they were, and how they could reach their home. And as though they had been sea worshippers, as the Persians were sun worshippers, their shouts of ecstasy broke forth from a thousand lips, “The sea, the sea!” And so is it when the conviction of God’s Fatherly love, forgiving love, protecting love, tender, changeless, all-encompassing love becomes the conviction of the human heart. That vision is an ecstasy beyond all that the sea inspired in war-wearied, and travel-stained, and home-sick Greeks. For—

“There’s a wideness in God’s mercy
Like the wideness of the sea.”

EDITOR.

The Way, The Truth, The Life.

“I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE.”—*John* xiv. 6.

MARVELLOUS words are these, are they not? Strange, from their depth and mystery, to come from the lips of a poor Galilean peasant, who until yesterday was not known, and is now without any of the back support of the current pomp and power. In any other mouth than that of this charming and wandering Teacher they would have been readily deemed the insane raving of a witless one, or else the mad brag of a towering ambition.

But such a conclusion is utterly forbidden to any candid mind by the high *intellectual* character He showed, so well balanced as to be incapable either of a credulous delusion or a mad fanaticism; and not less by His *high moral tone*, and the lofty spirituality of His nature.

Just as in the several wants of men we see a strange variety—all kinds of need and weakness,—so, in the person of Christ and by His Word, we find a great variety of figures made use of (Bread, Light, a Door, Vine, &c.) to set forth some aspect of His manifold fitness to serve the complex necessities of the race.

In giving an answer to this question of Thomas, on this the greatest evening of His life—when His soul overflowed with an indescribable meekness and grandeur, and the dark shadows of coming doom were gathering around,—He made the triple claim of being—The one Supreme Pattern and Director of all *Human Conduct*; The one Chief Voice and Satisfaction for all *Human Thought*; The one Sole Guarantee of a Glorious *Human Destiny*.

I.—THE ONE SUPREME PATTERN AND DIRECTOR OF CONDUCT. The Greek word "*odos*" has *two* meanings,—a *road*, and a *manner of life*, both of which are completely true of The Christ of God.

If the human heart is craving to find in its weary wanderings some quiet resting place from the feverish heat of toil; if it is yet seeking with anxious and fearful strain after some refuge, some safe shelter from a dismal peril, a storm it deems more than possible; if, weighed down by a sense of inward guilt and reproaches for a dark and deficient past, it is conscious of a want of harmony with the great Power—not *ourselves*; *then*, and to all such, the Holy Christ makes known the Father as the one Supreme Source of all spiritual good,—the eternal home and defence of His people. "The name of the Lord is a strong Tower," &c.

How many are there now—as of old—who, bewildered by an unappeased spirit hunger, a painful restlessness of heart, are crying—if not in words, yet in spirit,—"*Show us the Father*" and we are content. Save us from the anguish, the torturing sense of being orphans in the world. Give us relief and assurance amid the clamour of the market and the babble of the crowd. *Lead us to God.*

Just as demand brings the supply, and counterfeits in the bargain, so, trading upon this aching void, this giant ghastly

want, a crowd of adventurers have put in an appearance—to mislead—under a pretence of satisfying such weary, stricken, and sore ones.

Here it is we see the value of the Blessed Christ, who, standing in the cross-way of the world, at seven lane ends, just at the point where many start away on mistaken roads, here cries—“I am the way”; this is the way to the Father whom you are calling for; no other road is found, “no other name is given.” “No man cometh unto the Father but by Me.” He that would find pardon for guilt,—*only by Me*; peace for unrest, purity for uncleanness, &c., &c.,—*only by Me*. “I am the way” for every single blessing a sinner needs, or a God can bestow.

While all this may show the primary truth here taught us by the Lord, that He only can bridge the great, the dread abyss that lies between earth with its madness and sin, and heaven with its purity and glory, still it is no less true that we have in Christ a complete *pattern* for human conduct, a sample for our manner of life.

In some such sense Paul used the word, “destruction and misery are in their *ways*.” See also James i. 8, and 2 Peter ii. 15. We often hear it said, “He has a strange *way* with him”; or we ask, “Which *way* did he do it? We, therefore, do not put any strained meaning on the word when, in speaking of Christ as “The Way,” we judge Him as giving us “an example that we should follow in His steps.”

II.—THE ONE CHIEF VOICE AND SATISFACTION FOR HUMAN THOUGHT. “I am the Truth.” Above the claims of all other teachers, He makes the tremendous self-assertion which echoes on from age to age—“I am the Truth.” Being both its centre and circumference, He brought to us the knowledge of the Father and of life and immortality,—truths that had been floating in men’s dreams, but had lacked the voice to give them both warrant and substance. Here it is we touch the fringe of questions which are by some of our great thinkers deemed the topics of the hour, viz.—the knowableness of God and the hope of another life. What if they are hidden in mystery? So is gravitation, and so is electricity.

Men may not know why the magnet always points to the north, and yet, amid the sense of its mystery, the sailor makes bold to trust to it in the fury of the storm, a thousand miles from shore, nor does it ever fail him.

We may find it difficult to put into a crisp and clear syllogistic form and induction the evidence that God exists, and that man shall overlive the decay of his mortal house; still, our intuitive convictions all point and tend in that direction, and such facts of nature, so common to us all, wise men will trust.

The late Louis Blanc once said to the *Daily News* correspondent, "I am a freethinker, but I am impelled by sentiment to clutch at the doctrine of immortality. I could not bear to think that I am never again to meet Christina," his late wife. Is it wise or kind to destroy such a sentiment, for if it were not true, why what harm can it do?

While Christ is Himself the Truth,—and not simply a teacher; not even its shrine, but its very sun and substance; all that the largest intellect can ever need, and infinitely more than it can ever grasp,—we are well content to lead all light seekers to Him, to "Jesus only," announcing in the accent of a strong conviction, "In Him are hid all the treasures," &c.

As without the sun nature would be withered and barren, and all around would gather a chill horror of darkness; so, without Christ, Sodoms and Gomorrahs would rapidly multiply, and the very blackness of perdition would settle down upon the race.

Here is the "Light that lighteth every man," even "the babes and sucklings," in whom It perfects praise.

III.—THE ONE GUARANTEE OF A GLORIOUS HUMAN DESTINY. We see the Christ as standing by the valley of dry bones and at the mouth of the grave, crying in either position,—“I am the Life,” the life for dead souls *now*, and the promise of life for *evermore*.

There is a sense in which we sometimes use the phrase, "life," with a lower and yet a very suggestive meaning; as for instance we speak of a man who is hardly better than a clothed piece of animated jelly,—“He has no life; there’s no spirit in him.” “He is wanting,”—not in wisdom, but in life. Or, we ask for

some duties,—“Has he *life*? Is there spring and bound in him?” No man wanting in this should ever aspire to be a leader of men.

Whatever measure of this there may have been in the Christ, this was but a very, very small percentage of the wealth and depth of meaning hidden in the text.

While “life in Christ” has come to be the watchword of a party, it happily enshrines a truth in which the body of the faithful all agree,—that there is in Christ a heavenward spring, a divine, inworking leaven; and that He and they have a common life, not dimly taught by the vine and its branches, the head and members of a body. “He that hath the Son, hath life.” “This life is in His Son.” “Christ liveth in me.” “In Him was life,” &c. *How* this life can be *in* us and be ours is truly a mystery, but not necessarily false, as nature herself will show us.

But further, we are also taught in this passage that Christ, as our Life, is the Guarantee and Pledge, the Pattern of our glorious future human destiny. “Because I live, ye shall live also.” “When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.” No argument can be more conclusive than that masterly statement of Paul’s to the Corinthians, “Now is Christ risen,” &c. The condensed and rapid reasoning of that (fifteenth) chapter, with its terse statements, can find nothing but weakness in any attempt to expand them. It is unique in its grandeur, and as an argument most resistless in its force. Illustrations and analogies of the resurrection, strength from weakness and life from decay and death, we find in nature around us in troops. “By man came death, by man came also (life) the resurrection of the dead.” “The Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout.” “Where I am, there shall My servants be.”

SCARBOROUGH.

E. D. GREEN.



The Rule Without Exception.

“HE HATH DONE ALL THINGS WELL.”—*Mark* vii. 37.

THIS was the exclamation of the friends of a deaf man who also had an impediment in his speech, when they witnessed his perfect cure by Christ. They appear to have caught a glimpse of the sweet tenderness and beauty, as well as the might of the Saviour's work. Judging from the *sample*, they passed an unhesitating verdict upon all the acts of Christ. The occasion was a joyful one, but never was a truer watchword provided for a time of sorrow. To realize it is blessedness indeed. He hath painted the bright colours into our life-picture—“well”: He hath filled in the dark shadows—“well.” He hath done *all* things—*well*.

I.—THESE WORDS WILL BE UTTERED DOUBTINGLY; with tremulous hesitation; they will be received, it may be, with dissent, and opposition;—“He hath done all things *well*!” Sent that sorrow—crushed that hope—crossed that cherished plan; done all this *well*!

The multitude was excited. It is not a fair conclusion to draw an universal inference from a single instance. A person may perform *one* kind act,—does that prove that he is always kind? Hath He done all things well? But let the hesitating consider—

1. *We are not in a position to judge all that He does.* We are in the position of a child attempting to pass judgment upon the motives and plans of a wise parent; or of a patient passing an opinion upon the proceedings of a skilful physician.

2.—*What motive can He have for dealing otherwise than wisely and kindly in every case?* “He cannot deny Himself.”

3.—*How often we find we can pronounce “well” upon His doings.* We are surrounded by mystery but we can see that it is the hand of Love that is at work. Let us take this Gospel of Mark and go through it, underlining the acts and conduct of Christ as recorded in it. We have graphic descriptions of the proceedings of His Jewish enemies, of His disciples, of the doings of spiritual beings; but in what a striking contrast of dignity,

magnanimity, and grace, His acts and spirit appear ! Truly "He hath done all things well."

4. *The more right, and refined, and good we become the more righteous, and good, and beautiful all the Divine procedure appears to our view.* We catch a glimpse of unclouded perfectness in God. Sometimes we can say, even through tears,—“He hath done,” He must do, “all things well.”

II.—THE WORDS THUS UTTERED CONFIDENTLY, What do they imply ?

1. The *kind of things* that He does. “All things.”—How many ; how varied !

2. The *way* in which He does them. “Well” means “gracefully,” “beautifully.” *E. g.* : The healing of this deaf man.

First : *Let us reflect what must be the moral consciousness of God ?* What was the consciousness of Jesus Christ ?—“I have done all things well.”

Second : *God does not ride rough-shod over the convictions or the feelings of men.* He loves to have their judgment on His side ;—“Which of you convinceth me of sin ?” This will be the universal verdict by-and-bye—“He hath done all things well.”

Men may err, and change, and fail of what is right and lovely ; *not* He ; and we are in His hands.

ILFRACOMBE.

JOSEPH MORRIS.



Hindrances to Following Christ.

“PETER SAID UNTO HIM, LORD, WHY CANNOT I FOLLOW THEE NOW ?”—*John* xiii. 37.

THOUGH Christ ordained twelve that they might be with Him, yet there were some experiences in His life in which the disciples could not take part. This especially obvious at close of Christ's life. When the hour came that the Son of Man was to be glorified He stood forth in sublime and solitary grandeur, and said to Simon Peter, “Whither I go, thou canst not follow Me now.” Peter was struck with amazement and said, “Lord, why

cannot I follow Thee now?" The reply given by the Master showed there were hidden depths of depravity in the heart of Peter that he knew not of, which in a dawning hour would rise and sweep him into thrice repeated denial of Jesus. How frequently in the Christian life hindrances present themselves in the way of complete consecration to the service of Christ. The soul seems willing to sacrifice itself upon the altar of service, the heart pants to follow closely in the footprints of the Redeemer; but the voice comes, "Thou canst not follow Me now." In bewilderment the soul asks, "Why?" There may be various reasons.

I.—IT MAY BE ESSENTIALLY UNATTAINABLE. The height we aspire to scale may be inaccessible; the deep we desire to sound, unfathomable. It was so in case of Peter; we cannot suffer and die as Christ did. *Sickness, poverty, ignorance, old age, &c.*, may render impossible the immediate fulfilment of the heart's desire.

II.—IT MAY BE UNNECESSARY. The fervour of love, or fires of passion, may prompt to extravagant enterprizes, Utopian schemes.

III.—IT MAY BE UNTIMELY. Human nature prone to rashness and precipitancy. God teaches us to labour and wait. Undisciplined youth must be trained; those who are to teach must first learn. Our great Master waited for thirty years before fully entering upon His ministry. The disciples were not fully equipped for their work till the day of Pentecost came and the baptism of fire. Divine discipline is *gradual*, divine progress is *steady* and *sure*. Many Hotspurs and Greathearts in the kingdom of grace have desired to accelerate the movements of the Redeemer, and to keep close by His side in His victorious marches, but the salutary reply has come, "thou canst not follow Me now, but thou shalt follow Me afterwards." Those who are checked from close fellowship with Christ in His mysterious achievements here and now, shall—if they are faithful—follow Him closely hereafter, on earth or in heaven.

IV.—IT MAY BE GUILTILY IMPOSSIBLE. There are causes why men cannot follow Jesus now, springing from the *human*, and not divine side. (a) *Worldly cares may hinder*. Especially in

an age of mad competitiveness like this. Alas, how many allow the crowds of daily cares to keep them from touching and following Christ. (b) *Religious doubts may hinder.* Doubt creates clouds, which not only obscure spiritual vision, but impede Christian progress. Mistrust stagnates love, paralyses power. (c) *Besetting sins may hinder.* Temptation is not sin, but it may keep the soul from complete surrender to Christ, may stand in the way of following Jesus. Proneness to some sin peculiar to our circumstances, or temperament, may prove a very serious and, if not conquered, fatal barrier to consistent discipleship. "Wherefore let us lay aside every weight," &c. (d) *Half-heartedness may hinder.* Christ demanded, and demands still, that men shall *unreservedly* follow Him. He must be loved *supremely*. We must "love Him because He first loved us," and *with a love similar* to that with which He loved us. The condition of discipleship was, leaving all and following Christ. The conditions are not changed. We cannot follow Him now except we relinquish Satan, self, and every evil way; except with faith, hope, love, we *come* to Him,—with holy resignation and complete consecration *cling* to Him. Thus our lives may become beautiful here and blessed for evermore.

CLIFTON.

FREDERICK W. BROWN.

Paul at Miletus.

"WHEREFORE I TAKE YOU TO RECORD THIS DAY, THAT I AM PURE FROM THE BLOOD OF ALL MEN. FOR I HAVE NOT SHUNNED TO DECLARE UNTO YOU ALL THE COUNSEL OF GOD."—*Acts* xx. 26, 27.

A FAREWELL on the shore of the Aegean [*c. f.*, Calvin's farewell on the banks of Lake Lemán]. A fine specimen of a parting address! The exquisite touches, the deep pathos, the affectionate counsels, the solemn warnings (and how much besides?) all compressed into the narrow space of eighteen verses.

I.—“ALL THE COUNSEL OF GOD.”

A subject so vast and yet so simple! One which “angels desire to look into.” How immeasurable its depths and heights! the believer ever learning—the glorified saint ever adoring and ever “lost in wonder, love, and praise.” Yet the Gospel can be uttered in a single breath, and one short sentence which a child might speak would express the Divine counsel.

[Set forth the Sacrifice of the Cross, for the sake of which, and by which, it is God’s pleasure to save man; then the other doctrines which cluster round this mighty centre.]

II.—“NOT SHUNNED TO DECLARE.” How declared?

1. *By the unreserved, full, faithful exposition of it in the public preaching of God’s Word.* No trimming—no suppression of any portion of it—no yielding to the tempting “Prophesy unto us smooth things”—but anxious and determined to declare the TRUTH whether men would “hear or . . . forbear.”

2. *By seeking personal contact, and speaking to individual men and women “from house to house.”*

[Can you not help with the sick and others who are longing to be spoken to?]

3. *By setting it forth with the pen.* What multitudes Paul has reached in this way! So did Luther and Calvin. More than twenty years ago wrote a letter myself to a young man by means of which he was saved. An “old disciple” whose funeral sermon I preached a few years since was saved by a letter.

4. *By showing it forth in the life.* I have good faith in this method; sometimes it is the sole one at our command.

A man may neglect public warnings, private entreaties, written appeals—who may yet fall beneath this last, and oftentimes mightiest, shaft of all. Therefore let us look to our influence!

III.—“PURE FROM THE BLOOD OF ALL MEN.”

The Apostle had in mind perhaps that thirty-third chapter of Ezekiel, and those words so terrible which seem almost to chill the very marrow as we read them, or hear them read:—“So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shall hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me . . . if thou dost not speak to warn the

wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity ; but his blood will I require at thine hand."

O, the blood of souls !

"Out, damn'd spot ! out, I say.

What ! will these hands ne'er be clean ?

Here's the smell of blood still : all the perfumes of

Arabia will not sweeten this little hand, Oh ! Oh ! Oh !"—

Lady Macbeth.

"The four rivers would not cleanse my soul."—*Cain.*

But the blood of souls ! What can cleanse such guilt ? "Can the blood of bulls," &c. ? Nay ? "not all the blood of beasts," &c. Rivers of waters, yea, the fulness of ocean would not avail. May the all-efficacious cleansing of Christ be yours and mine !

ST. CLEMENT'S, BRISTOL.

FAIRFAX GOODALL, B.A.

Divine Recuperation of Humanity.

"EVEN THE YOUTHS SHALL FAINT AND BE WEARY, AND THE YOUNG MEN SHALL UTTERLY FALL : BUT THEY THAT WAIT UPON THE LORD SHALL RENEW THEIR STRENGTH ; THEY SHALL MOUNT UP WITH WINGS AS EAGLES ; THEY SHALL RUN, AND NOT BE WEARY ; AND THEY SHALL WALK, AND NOT FAINT."—*Isaiah* xl. 30, 31.

THIS is one of the most magnificent chapters in the grand old book we call The Bible. It is most grand in conception and sublime in devotion. In these verses there is a threefold aspect of man that stands out before us.

I.—HUMANITY TERRIBLY EXHAUSTED IN STRENGTH. "Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall." Youths and young men are ever amongst the most vigorous of the race: the full tide of life runs through their veins; they abound in energy, they are vigorous in muscle and in limb; albeit even these get exhausted in energy. Everywhere in society are men met with jaded, wearied, and all but prostrate,—

in the fields of agriculture, in the heated walks of commerce, in the toiling scenes of artisanship. Yes, and in literature, politics, religion, and even in the gilded halls and the hilarious saloons of voluptuous pleasures and sensational amusements we find "youths that are weary and young men that utterly fall." Poor humanity is heavy burdened; it bows like Atlas with a world on its shoulders. Verily, as of old, so now and everywhere, "people weary themselves for very vanity." To the eye of Christ men everywhere appear as "weary and heavy laden."

II.—HUMANITY DIVINELY RECUPERATED. Man is here represented as having his strength renewed. "They shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint." All men have a twofold spirit of action—the *speculative* and the *practical*.

(1) In the *speculative* they move *upward*. They rise into the region of thought and theory, they soar from details to principles, from forms to things, from phenomena to eternal laws, from the seen to the unseen, from the temporal to the eternal. All men, though in different degrees, have a tendency and faculty for this upward movement, but, alas, how feeble, how nervous and potentless they appear in this sphere of action. Even the "youths faint and are weary, and the young men utterly fall." But in this divine recuperation what a change, "they mount up with wings as eagles," &c. They rise from the clouds of ignorance, from the storms of doubt and the tempest of passion, into the calm and sunny regions of eternal realities. In the intellectual domain the elevation is vigorous.

(2) In the *practical* they move *onwards*. "They run and are not weary, they walk and are not faint." They have to attend to the actual concerns and duties of earth and time. In this department they are so re-invigorated, so divinely recuperated, that instead of *fainting*, *wearying*, and *falling*, "they run and are not weary, they walk and are not faint." They move on in their temporal duties with increased alacrity and unfailing vigour. It is beautiful to see this recuperative power in nature, investing with new strength and fresh beauty those endless productions of the field and the forest that in winter lay withered and dead.

It is beautiful to see it in the animal creation appearing with new skin, new hair, and new plumage; but how much more beautiful is it to see it in exhausted humanity, enabling it, after having wallowed in the dirt, to mount up on wings as an eagle, and being utterly wearied of the duties of life to walk and not faint.

III.—HUMANITY DIVINELY RECUPERATED BY GENUINE, PRACTICAL RELIGION. “They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint.” Waiting upon the Lord implies (1) A practical *realisation of His presence*. No one waits upon Him who does not feel Him ever near, the grand object in their horizon and the mighty pulse in their being. (2) A practical *recognition of His claims*. He claims the supreme love and the loyal service of all. Now this is genuine religion and this only. Religion consisteth not in a theoretical confession of His existence and claims, but in a practical realisation. Now, this practical religion is that by which the mighty Maker of our being recuperates exhausted humanity. There is a religion that weakens, degrades, and crushes humanity. As a fact, a spurious religion has in all ages and countries been the greatest curse of the race, but the genuine is its true help, its saviour. Who does not see that if a man wait upon the Lord, in the true sense, the highest strength must come to him,—strength of confidence in the ALL GOOD, ALL WISE, and ALL MIGHTY; strength of hope for ultimate perfection. This is the strength-renewing power and nothing else.

LONDON.

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.



“We are all like the Adam in the epic poem who look upon our first night as the last day, and the setting of the sun as the setting of the world. We all grieve for our friends as if there were no better future *yonder*, and grieve for ourselves as if there were no better *here*, for all our passions are by birth atheists and unbelievers.”—RICHTER.

Homiletical Commentary.

NOTES ON THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

A Stern Rebuke and a Gracious Message.

Chapter iv. 1-4.—“YE ADULTERERS AND ADULTERESSES, KNOW YE NOT THAT THE FRIENDSHIP OF THE WORLD IS ENMITY WITH GOD? WHOSOEVER THEREFORE WILL BE A FRIEND OF THE WORLD IS THE ENEMY OF GOD. DO YE THINK THAT THE SCRIPTURE SAITH IN VAIN, THE SPIRIT THAT DWELLETH IN US LUSTETH TO ENVY? BUT HE GIVETH MORE GRACE. WHEREFORE HE SAITH, GOD RESISTETH THE PROUD, BUT GIVETH GRACE UNTO THE HUMBLE.”

THE members of the churches, or a considerable number of the members of the churches to whom the apostle sent this letter, were of a very imperfectly sanctified, of a very worldly type. Judging them by their spirit and by their conduct, as these come out in the rebukes he administers to them, we are apt to wonder

where there could be room for charity to allow them the name of Christian brethren at all. James is generally supposed to be a somewhat harsh and stern man. His epistle has just to be read in the light of his rebukes to show him to be the very incarnation of the charity his fellow-apostle celebrates,—the charity which believeth all things. Men and women with bitter envying in their hearts; with tongues set on fire, worlds of iniquity; with conduct best described by such alien words as “wars and battles,” the spirit of their desires, the spirit of Diotrephes, whose name stands for ever as the “other name” for what ought never to be found in any man who calls himself by the Christian name, the lust of power and pre-eminence: men and women of whom all this could be truly said, are yet to be spoken of, to be treated

James the
righteous, is
James the
charitable.

and entreated as Christian men and women. Surely, James the righteous was James the charitable! Surely, no one need hesitate to say that James, though not the brother according to the flesh of John, the apostle of love, was his brother according to the spirit; that in his heart, along with, nay, as the cause of all the sternness of rebuke, was the love which was bold enough, because it was deep enough, to expose that it might destroy those evil elements which disgraced and obstructed the Christian cause. If this apostle had had the honour of his Master less at heart, his rebukes of that Master's unworthy disciples would have been less keen; if he had been as worldly and self-seeking as these disciples were, he would not have seen their worldliness or self-seekingness so closely as to call forth any rebuke at all; if he had not intensely desired their higher good, he would have let them go on with their wranglings and strifes, till they had proved themselves even beyond the limit of his charitableness, unworthy the Christian name. On the other hand, it is a holy jealousy of his Master's good name, it is an intense spirituality of nature that recoils in indignation from such utter worldliness, it is a profound desire for the deliverance of these church members from every evil. These speak in every line of the apostle, these lie at the heart of every rebuke, these constitute the persuasiveness and the power of every entreaty to "cleanse their hands and to purify their hearts, to humble themselves in the sight of the Lord."

It needs that we should recognise all this to be able to go on to the exposition of what follows. He has said some terrible things already; he has written down and has not blotted out, but has sent to them some terrible sayings,—quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow, discerning so clearly the thoughts and intents of the heart that they have recoiled from them, saying they were not meant for them, while all the time their consciences were siding with the apostle and saying, "Yes, they were meant for us." He has said some terrible things already, nothing so terrible as this: "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is

enmity against God? whosoever would be a friend of the world maketh himself an enemy of God."

The designation is not applied in its literal sense, as, indeed, is evident from the very question the apostle puts in connection with it. James was a Hebrew Christian writing to Hebrew

**Figurative
language.**

Christians. He and they alike were acquainted with the figurative language of the Old Testament,

where the covenant between God and His people was so frequently spoken of as a marriage covenant, and where the unfaithfulness of His people to this covenant was spoken of as unfaithfulness to their marriage vows. "Thy Maker is thy Husband." "Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord, for I am married unto you." "Only acknowledge thine iniquity that thou hast dealt treacherously with Me: as a wife that committeth adultery, which taketh strangers instead of her husband." (And so in the New Testament.) James and his Hebrew readers were familiar with this figurative language, and when he applied it to them they at once knew that he meant to accuse them of being perilously near the verge of that apostasy, parallel to the forsaking of her husband by a woman, when a disciple no longer finding his chief joy in God, in love to God, in the experience of spiritual desires and the fulfilment of them, seeks this chief joy in the world and in the love of the world,—the lust of the flesh, or the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life. "Ye adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity against God? whosoever would be a friend of the world maketh himself an enemy of God." When a woman forsakes her husband for another, she thereby makes herself the enemy of her husband; she shows that she was his enemy: if she had not been his enemy, if there had been any lingering trace of affection in her she would not have forsaken him; it was because she was estranged from him, alienated from him, at enmity with him, that she forsook him for another. In the same way a professing Christian, a member of Christ's church, a man who says his whole heart and soul go out after the living God, and who has felt something of the truth of all this in his own experience; this man losing his interest in it all, not caring any longer for the spread of the

sweet and peaceful fruits of the Spirit throughout the church of Christ, but seeking only his own worldly gratification in the lust of power or pre-eminence, no matter what bitter strifes and envyings, wars and battles might ensue; this man breaks his marriage vows to Christ, his is the covetousness which is idolatry, and idolatry, as we know, is the very height of enmity against God. The last sin of a wife against her husband is to prefer another before him; the last sin of a member of Christ is to find

Application
literal.

that pleasure in worldliness which he no longer finds in Christ; is to have a keener zest in the pursuit of power and pre-eminence than in the growth and progress of humility and submissiveness and all the other fruits of the Spirit in his own soul; is to be so absorbed in the mere activities, the outward activities through which power and pre-eminence can be attained, as to have become insensible to the need of the inward activities, the exercises of the soul in prayer and faith and hope toward God. It is to this man to whom the apostle refers in the figurative language of the text. Such an one makes himself the enemy of God.

This may seem a hard saying; it cannot, however, be gainsayed. The husband whom a woman forsakes, and the man for whom she forsakes him; in the nature of things the two men are antagonistic, irreconcilable; and in the very act of making friends with the one, the woman has constituted herself at enmity with the other. It is well worth trying to grasp the meaning here; the truth that lies at the heart of the illustration is well worth most careful pondering. The idea of husband, and the idea of one for whom a husband is forsaken; are not these in their very nature eternally irreconcilable; would not chastity be a mere word if they were not? A husband who should make a friend of, or even be on indifferent terms with the man for whom his wife had forsaken him; does not divinely implanted jealousy, that unbribeable guardian of the marriage bond forbid, make impossible the very thought? A woman on friendly terms with both,—with the husband whom she forsook, and the man for whom she forsook him,—is not the very suggestion revolting? It is this very revolting possibility

The human
explains
the Divine.

which the apostle sees to have taken place, and which we would see too if our senses were as clear and as spiritual as his. "Thy Maker is thy husband." Thou art bound to Him with all the solemnity and with all the indissolubleness of the marriage tie, and yet thou hast forsaken Him, thou hast preferred another before Him, thou hast become a lover of pleasure more than a lover of God. Ye breakers of your marriage vows, know ye not that whosoever will be a friend of the world maketh himself an enemy of God?

There are two things which prevent our seeing the similarity between the condition of the woman who forsakes her husband for another, and the disciple of Christ who forsakes Him for the world. We see an enormity of wickedness in the one case which we do not see in the other: first, because it is open, palpable, comes home to our common universal feelings, while the other is hidden, spiritual, out of sight; the one is a scandal, rare, attracting all eyes; the other, well, it is not rare, it is everywhere about; in some fashion or other what is it that is everywhere seen but the love of the world? And if a professing disciple draws nearer and nearer to the world, does not the crowd of its worshippers absorb him, and where there are so many who is to single him out? The love of the world is common, it needs the spiritual eye to detect it, and because of this, its enormity on the part of the disciple of Christ is not seen.

But there is another reason, and it lies in the difficulty of clearly defining to ourselves, and firmly holding before us what it really is to love the world—in what worldliness really consists. The way we are accustomed to look at it is somewhat in this fashion. We select from among the infinite number of habits and customs that are observed among the men and women around us, and saying of this and that it is worldly, brand these alone as worldly; flattering ourselves that as these are not our customs so we are not worldly. Theatre-going, Ball Rooms and Dancing Parties, absorption in business: these are worldly habits, but then they are not *our* habits, and so we are not worldly: as if the spirit that can put on any shape

Two things
prevent our
seeing this.

First mistake

it pleases would be constrained to confine itself to these: as if because the Tempter could not get us to make our home of the Theatre, the Ball Room, or the Counting House, he has not fifty other places, the Church being one of them, where we may live such worldly lives as even he would be contented to see us live!

This is one mistake, there is another that is like unto it; it is the method we often adopt to avoid worldliness.
Second mistake. The habits just mentioned are worldly, and to get into these habits would be to be possessed of the spirit of worldliness: "yes, but would it be worldly to conform to them once and again: not to make a habit of it, you know, but when it could not do any harm to anybody? It is a pity these things or such things are wrong, they are so very pleasant, if they were not wrong we could enjoy them." As if the wish that what we believe to be worldly things were not worldly, were not as worldly a wish as the heart of man can conceive: as if that man were not already far gone from God, whose affections go out towards what he believes to be God's foe! "The very entertainment of the wish to cultivate the friendship of the world by going as near to it as we can, betrays an inclination and solicitude to have as much of worldliness as can possibly be had; and who does not see that when such is the object, the heart in reality, in its predominant inclinations and desires, is more with the world than with God? The man who acts on such a principle will be found going a step further, and a step further, with less and less of misgiving and recoil, till the line of demarcation between him and the world comes to be entirely blotted out;"* till he who *would* be, who wished and willed to be, the friend of the world has made himself the enemy of God.

The exposure of the mistakes we make regarding the nature of worldliness, the exposure of the means we take to keep clear of it, is their rectification; to warn against the false is, so far, to make manifest the true. Worldliness does not consist in this or that, it consists in the spirit in which we do this or that. What is the spirit of a man's life, what is the moral atmosphere in which he lives and moves and has his being, what is the

* Wardlaw on James, p. 244.

impression you have of him after you have had long and confidential conversations with him? and when you have got to the spring of his aims and motives is it his own will he wants to carry out in all things? is it his own power and position, his own reputation for power and position he mostly cares for? and to ensure this will he spare no pains, will he spare no feelings: such

What is worldliness? a man lives in the element of worldliness; it is the law of the spirit of his life. He may be highly thought of in the community to which he belongs, he may die in the very odour of sanctity, but, if he dies as he lived, he dies a worldly man, an enemy of God. "Be not deceived: God is not mocked; the friendship of the world *is* enmity with God."

Or think ye that the Scripture speaketh in vain? Doth the spirit which he made to dwell in us long unto envying? Have we been mistaken about the teaching of Scripture and about the fruits of the Spirit? Does the Scripture enjoin upon us the duty of seeking the pre-eminence? Are these the results of the Spirit's indwelling, these envyings and strifes, these jealousies and factions, these wars and battles that are waged among you?

Holy sarcasm. There is a holy sarcasm in the question; he would startle them into an amazement of wrath against themselves; he would shock the sensibility to spiritual things they yet retained, by suggesting in this fashion that possibly after all it was a highly Christian thing to be envious, that it showed a high attainment in the Divine life, that, indeed, it was the special end of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit to long unto envying! It had been thought that manifestations, such as were taking place among his hearers were only to be found among the uncovenanted heathen, who knew no better, where the works of the flesh were manifest: hatred, variance, wrath, strife, envyings; and it had been told how these same envyings had led in that uncovenanted, outside world to banishments, and murders, and deaths; the poison-bowl for Socrates, and exile for Aristides the Just. These were supposed to be the natural manifestations of the uncovenanted heathen—but have we been mistaken? Doth the spirit which He made to dwell in us lust unto envying? Is this the fruit of the spirit? There is irony in his words: but

his tone soon changes to gentleness; if he has arrested their thoughts by the strange demand he has just made, he will make use of their startled condition to tell them, to impress upon them the

<p>Ending in gentle striving.</p>	<p>reality of that supply of more grace, which is ever ready for those who, startled out of their fancied fulness, feel more deeply their emptiness and need.</p>
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As if he had changed his tone: "you cannot surely think that the spirit which dwelleth in you lusteth to envy: I did but suggest it to startle you, to let you see how far you were from producing His fruits; but are you startled, are you alarmed, are you ready to forsake these envious moods, and are you afraid His grace will fail?" Nay, "but He giveth more grace:" "Greater grace: greater than the strength of depravity, greater than the the power of the spirit of darkness, from whom temptations to envy and all forms of worldliness come." Wherefore He saith: and it is here the goodness and severity of God meet; it is here he tells how the proud and the scornful remain without the blessing, while the humble, bending lowly, and in deep contrition before Him, are sent away full; "wherefore He saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble."

More grace.

The proud man is the man who stands upon his own merits, who glorifies himself and is independent of God, him God resists; but the humble man, the man who, ashamed of his envyings and strifes in the presence of that Spirit who came to dwell in him that he might bless him with peace, peace with himself, and with his fellow-man, this man God draws near to forgive, receives into favour, gives more grace, enables him to overcome and to cast out the evil thing from his heart, cleanses him from all his stains, makes him whiter than the snow, presents him perfect and blameless to the Father; no longer a breaker of his marriage vows, but making his God his chief joy. "Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble. Submit yourselves, therefore, to God. Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall lift you up."

GLASGOW.

PETER RUTHERFORD.

GERMS OF PRACTICAL THOUGHT EVOLVED FROM
THE APOCALYPSE.

[The writer of these Homiletic Sketches aims not to decide between the numerous theories and speculations which the interpreters of this book have propounded. So far as his work is concerned it does not matter who the author may be, the exact time in which he lived, the place of his writing, or the peculiarities of his language. The whole book appears to his mind as a *grand, prophetic poem*, full of strange and grotesque symbols. As a prophecy, some have regarded it as *already fulfilled*, such as Grotius, Hammond, Bossuet, Calmet, Wetstein, Eichhorn, Hug, Herder, Ewald, Lücke, De Wette, Dusterdieck, Stuart, Lee, and Maurice. These are called the *Præterist* expositors. Some have regarded it as yet almost entirely *unfulfilled*. All events referred to, except those in the first three chapters, they take as pointing to what is yet to come. Among such interpreters in recent times are Drs. Todd, Maitland, Newton, De Burgh, &c. These are called *Futurists*. Some regard it as in a *progressive course* of fulfilment, running on from the first century to the end of time. Amongst these interpreters the following names are included: Mede, Sir I. Newton, Vitringa, Bengel, Woodhouse, Faber, E. B. Elliott, Wordsworth, Hengstenberg, Ebrard, &c. These are called *Historical* expositors. The present Homiletic Sketches will be drawn in the light of this school. The whole book is a symbolical representation of a great moral campaign between right and wrong, running on from the dawn of the Christian era to the crash of doom. Babylon here is, so to say, the metropolis of evil and Jerusalem the metropolis of good. The battle is not between the mere forms, organizations, and institutions of good and evil, but between their *spirit*, their essence. The victories of Christ here are, to use the language of Carpenter, "against all wrong-thoughtedness, wrong-heartedness, and wrong-spiritedness."]

No. IX.

The Words of Christ from Eternity to the Congregation
at Ephesus.

"UNTO THE ANGEL OF THE CHURCH OF EPHESUS WRITE; THESE THINGS SAITH HE THAT HOLDETH THE SEVEN STARS IN HIS RIGHT HAND, WHO WALKETH IN THE MIDST OF THE SEVEN GOLDEN CANDLESTICKS; I KNOW THY WORKS, AND THY LABOUR, AND THY PATIENCE, AND HOW THOU CANST NOT BEAR THEM WHICH ARE EVIL: AND THOU HAST TRIED THEM WHICH SAY THEY ARE APOSTLES, AND ARE NOT, AND HAST FOUND THEM LIARS: AND HAST BORNE, AND HAST PATIENCE, AND FOR MY NAME'S SAKE HAST LABOURED, AND HAST NOT FAINTED. NEVERTHELESS I HAVE SOMEWHAT AGAINST THEE, BECAUSE THOU HAST LEFT THY FIRST LOVE. REMEMBER THEREFORE FROM WHENCE THOU ART FALLEN, AND REPENT, AND DO THE FIRST WORKS; OR ELSE I WILL COME UNTO THEE QUICKLY, AND WILL REMOVE THY CANDLESTICK OUT OF HIS PLACE, EXCEPT THOU REPENT. BUT THIS THOU HAST, THAT THOU HATEST THE DEEDS OF THE NICOLAITANES, WHICH I ALSO HATE. HE THAT HATH AN EAR, LET HIM HEAR WHAT THE SPIRIT SAITH UNTO THE CHURCHES; TO HIM THAT OVERCOMETH WILL I GIVE TO EAT OF THE TREE OF LIFE, WHICH IS IN THE MIDST OF THE PARADISE OF GOD."—*Revelation* ii. 1-7.

THE quality of words, whether weak or potent, pure or un-virtuous, useful or otherwise, depends evermore upon the

character of the author. Hence the words of truly great men, intellectually and morally great, are the most blessed of

all the blessed things we have, —they are the organs of the highest light and choicest life. Hence the words of Christ have a value unsurpassed and unsurpassable. They are spirit and they are life. No words have ever sounded on our atmosphere, or appeared on the pages of universal literature approaching His in intrinsic value or spiritual usefulness. Here are His words after He had tabernacled on this earth for thirty long years, endured the agonies of crucifixion, slept in the darkness of the grave, and been in eternity for nearly

threescore years. Such words assuredly claim our supreme attention. They are addressed to the church at Ephesus.* For homiletic convenience the words of Christ in this epistle may be divided into four classes: Those which concern Himself, those which concern the congregation, those which concern the Divine Spirit, and those which concern moral conquerors.

I.—Those which concern HIMSELF. These refer to two things. (1) To His relation to the church. "*These things saith He that holdeth the seven stars*

* "Ephesus, the chief city of Tonia, "Asiae Annen," πρώτη τῆς Ἀσίας, as the Ephesians themselves styled it, asserting in this style for Ephesus that primacy which Smyrna and Pergamum disputed with it, had now so outstripped both its competitors that it was at once the civil and ecclesiastical centre of that 'Asia' with which we have to do. Wealthy, prosperous, and magnificent, a meeting-place of oriental religions and Greek culture, and famous on many grounds in heathen antiquity, it was chiefly famous for the celebrated temple of Diana, one of the seven wonders of the world, about which we read so much (Acts xix.). But Ephesus had better titles of honour than this. It was a city greatly favoured of God. St. Paul laboured there during three years (Acts xx. 31); he ordained Timothy to be bishop there (1 Tim. i. 3); (Acts xviii. 19, 24, 26); and Tychicus (Eph. vi. 21), all contributed to build up the church in that city. And, if we may judge from St. Paul's epistle to the Ephesians, and from his parting address to the elders of the church (Acts xx. 17-38), nowhere does the word of the Gospel seem to have found a kindlier soil, to have struck root more deeply, or to have borne fairer fruits of faith and love. St. John, too, had made it the chief seat of his ministry, his metropolis, during the closing years of his protracted life; from whence he exercised a wide, though not wholly unquestioned jurisdiction (Eph. iii. 9, 10) over the whole of 'Asia.' How early that ministry there began it is impossible to say, the date of his withdrawal from Jerusalem being itself uncertain, and uncertain also whether he at once chose Ephesus for the middle point of his spiritual activity. From a church to which so much was given, much would be required. How far it had profited as it ought by these signal advantages, how far it had maintained itself at those spiritual heights to which it had once attained, will presently be seen."—DEAN TRENCH.

in His right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks." The "seven stars" are the leading ministers of the seven churches. These He holds in His own hand. He holds the universe in His hands; He holds all men in His hand, good or bad. But the true ministers of His word He holds in a special sense. He holds them with all the care and tenderness with which a loving father holds by the hand his weak and timid child on a dreary and dangerous path. Not only does He *hold* the ministers of these churches in His hand, but He *moves* amongst them. "*He walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.*" "Christ," says Dr. Vaughan, "walks Himself among His candlesticks, and each separate lamp, of all the thousands which make up the branches of one candlestick, is as much trimmed and tended and fostered by Christ Himself as if there were no other but that one, and as if there were no human agency at all constituted for its oversight." His words refer (2) To His *knowledge* of the church. "*I know thy works.*" He knows human

works as no one else knows them. He knows not merely the *overt* acts, but inner motives; not merely the deeds done *by* the body, but *in* the body. His eye peers into those deep and vast regions of soul into which no other eye can pierce. "*I know thy works.*" He knows what is in man. In the works which He knows are comprehended the trials endured. "*Thy labour and thy patience.*" The painful discovery of falsehood in those who called themselves apostles or ministers of Christ, and also all declension in what is good. "*I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.*" The fact that Christ so thoroughly knows us should make us real, solemn, circumspect, and earnest. Again, notice in the words of Christ—

II.—Those which concern the CONGREGATION.

First: *He credits them with the good they possess.* "*Thou hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.*" There are four things which He sees in them to commend. (1) Their repugnance to wrong. "*Thou canst not bear them which are*

evil" (or evil men). To loathe the wrong for its own sake is one of the finest features of character. It is common, perhaps, to hate evil men when they are in poverty, suffering, and disgrace, but in such hatred there is no virtue. To hate evil in men of great possessions and high offices, millionaires, premiers, princes, kings, is in truth somewhat uncommon. Albeit evil in such is more heinous, more loathsome and damnable than evil anywhere else. It is sublimely grand to see men loathing the wrong as seen in the principalities and powers of this world. (2) Their patience in toil. Work is the duty of all, and the work of a genuine Christian in this life is most self-sacrificing, laborious, and trying. Hence patience is required—required on account of the opposition it has to encounter and the tardiness of the results. "Wherefore, beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable," &c. (3) Their insight into character. *"Thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars."* It is a rare thing for men to discern the real character of their fellow men,

especially of that of their religious teachers,—those who have set themselves up as "*apostles*." Hence the popularity of pulpit charlatans. All honour to the men at Ephesus, their eye was keen enough and heart brave enough to try the character of their teachers, which on scrutiny they found to be "*liars*." (4) Their hostility to error. *"But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate."* "We may suppose," says one of our most learned modern expositors, "that the Nicolaitanes were the Antinomians of the Asiatic church; persons who taught that the conduct is immaterial if the faith be right; that a man may say he hath faith, and, if so, may be indifferent altogether to his works; or who at least, if they did not teach this, yet encouraged the deceitful heart in drawing this inference, by failing to set strongly and even sharply before men the utter ruin of an inconsistent and unholy life, and then not least, but most of all, when that sinful life is combined with the loud profession of a saving faith." Error is an evil in whatever

character it appears and region it operates. Error in chemistry, surgery, medicine, mechanics, navigation, &c., is often fraught with terrible results. To oppose error, therefore, is a virtue.

Secondly: *He reproves them for the declension they manifest.* “*Nevertheless, thou hast left thy first love.*” Christly love is the life and sun of the soul; it is the beginning and end of genuine religion. Without charity—love—we are nothing. There is a danger of this waning. Some of the angels have lost it. Many good men have experienced its decay. This is a great evil; it is the sap leaving the tree, and the foliage withers, and death descends from branch to root. Christ implies that men are responsible for this loss. Where this love exists it can not only be maintained but increased,—the spark may be fanned into a flame.

Thirdly: *He urges them to reform.* In order to increase this waning love, He exhorts them to do four things. (1) *To remember.* “*Remember whence thou art fallen.*” Review the past and call to mind the sweet, delicate, blooming

affection of thy first love, with all the fresh joys and hopes it awakened. This memory will help resuscitation. (2) *To “repent.”* Repentance does not mean crying, confessing and throwing yourself into ecstasies, but a *change* in the spirit and purpose of life. (3) *To reproduce.* “*Do thy first works.*” Go over thy past life, reproduce thy old feeling, and re-attempt old effort. This can be done; we can relive our lives, the best as well as the worst portion of them. (4) *To tremble.* “*Or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of its place.*” “Terrible warning this! Let declension go on, and ruin is inevitable. This is true with individuals as well as with communities. In losing the candlestick, what a loss! The loss is midnight.” —*Caleb Morris.* Again, notice in the words of Christ—

III.—Those which concern the DIVINE SPIRIT. “*He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.*” These words are found in the seven

epistles. Two things are here implied—

First: That the Divine Spirit *makes communication to all the churches*. He speaks through material nature, through our spiritual constitution, through human history, through Jesus Christ. "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son." Blessed thought! The Divine is in communication with the human, and has constant and special communication with the churches. Christ, the incarnation and the minister of the Spirit hath said, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." The Spirit's words, as of old, bring life, order, light, and beauty out of chaos.

Secondly: That proper attention to these communications requires a *certain ear*. "*He that hath an ear.*" What is the ear? Not the mere ear of sense, nor the mere ear of intellect, it is the ear of the heart, the ear of sympathetic love. It is said that Christ opened the "eyes of His dis-

ciples that they might understand the Scriptures." The moral ear and eye of man are closed against the manifestation and voice of God. "The natural man desireth not the things of the Spirit." Unless a man has the sentiment of melody in him, you may peal into his ear the most magnificent strains of music and he feels no inspiration. Nothing comes to him but sound. As he who lacks an inward sympathy with the loftiest class of thoughts can listen unmoved to the grandest utterances of Plato, Milton, or Shakespeare, so he who lacks the ear of spiritual sympathy will be utterly unaffected by the communications which the *Spirit* makes to the churches. "*He that hath ears to hear,*"—it does not matter who he is, rich or poor, rude or cultured—"let him hear." Notice in the words of Christ—

IV.—Those which concern MORAL CONQUERORS. "*To him that overcometh will I give (to him will I give) to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God (in the paradise of God).*" Observe—

First: *Life is a battle.*

Enemies abound within and without. Spiritual excellence can only be reached by struggling, strenuous and unremitting. Observe—

Secondly: Life is a battle that *might be won*. "*Him that overcometh*." Thousands upon thousands have won the battle and shouted victory at the close.

Thirdly: The winning of the battle *is glorious*. "*I will give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God*." The reference to conquering is a prominent feature of St. John's other writings. The word, used but once in the three Gospels (Luke xi. 22), and but once by St. Paul (Rom. xii. 21), is found in John xvi. 33; 1 John ii. 13, 14; v. 4, 5; and occurs in all these epistles to the churches. The promise of the

tree of life is appropriate (1) To the virtue commended. Those who had not indulged in the license of Nicolaitaness shall eat of the tree of life. (2) To the special weakness of the Ephesians. To those who had fallen, and lost the paradise of first loving communion and fellowship with God (compare Gen. iii. 8 and 1 John i. 3), is held out the promise of a restored paradise and participation in the tree of life (compare chap. xxii. 2-14; Gen. iii. 22). This boon of immortality is the gift of Christ. "*I will give*." It is tasted in knowledge of God and of His Son (John xvii. 3); it is enjoyed in their presence" (chapter xxii. 3, 4).—*Bishop Boyd Carpenter*.

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

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"The mountain peace is a peace of *isolation*. It is well that we have the mountains as retreats from the fevered conventional life of cities. They cannot be subdued by man nor taken into his domains. They form a world apart, the sanctuary of nature which can never be crowded or profaned."—HUGH MACMILLAN, LL.D.

SEEDS OF SERMONS ON THE SECOND BOOK OF THE KINGS.

Wickedness, Retribution, & Divine Control, as Revealed in Nebuchadnezzar's Invasion of Judah.

"IN HIS DAYS NEBUCHADNEZZAR," &c.—2 *Kings* xxiv., xxv.

IN glancing through these chapters there are two objects that press on our attention.

(1) A national crisis. The peace, the dignity, the wealth, the religious privileges of Judah are converging to a close. Israel has already been carried away by a despot to a foreign land, and now Judah is meeting its fate. All nations have their crises,—they have their rise, their fall, their dissolution.

(2) A terrible despot. The name of Nebuchadnezzar comes for the first time under our attention. Who is he? He is a prominent figure in the histories and the prophecies of the old Scriptures. He was the son and successor of Nabodonazzar, who having been taken captive, brought Babylon at once into pre-eminence. The victories of Nebuchadnezzar were stupendous and many. Egypt, Syria, Phœnicia, Palestine, all

bowed to his triumphant arms. He made Babylon, his capital, one of the most wonderful cities of the world. The walls with which he fortified it contained, we are told, no less than five hundred million tons of masonry. He was at once the master and the terror of the age he lived in, which was six hundred years before Christ. There is no character in all history more pregnant with practical suggestions than his—a mighty fiend in human form.

We have in these two chapters a view of the *wickedness of man*, the *retribution of heaven*, and the *supremacy of God*. Here we have—

I.—THE WICKEDNESS OF MAN. The wickedness here displayed is marked—

First: By *inveteracy*. It is here said of Jehoiachin, "*He did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, according to*

all that his father had done."

In verse 18 the same is also said of Zedekiah, "*He did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, according to all that Jehoiachin had done.*" This has, indeed, been said of nearly all the kings of Judah, the same as the kings of Israel. What a hold then had wickedness taken on the Jewish people. It had so deeply struck its roots into their very being that neither the mercies nor the judgments of heaven could uproot it. It was a cancer transmitted from sire to son, poisoning their blood and eating up their nature. Thus, then, from generation to generation the wickedness of the Jewish people seemed to be a disease hereditary, ineradicable, and incurable. The wickedness here displayed is marked—

Secondly: By *tyranny*. "*At that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against Jerusalem, and the city was besieged. And Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came against the city, and his servants did besiege it.*" This is seen in the conduct of Nebuchadnezzar. What right had Nebuchadnezzar to

leave his own country, invade Judah, plunder it of its wealth, and bear away by violence its population? None whatever. It was tyranny of the worst kind, an outrage on every principle of humanity and justice. Sin is evermore tyrannic. We see it everywhere. On all hands do we see men and women endeavouring to bring men into subjection,—masters their servants, employers their employees, rulers their subjects. Tyranny everywhere is the evidence, the effect, and the instrument of wickedness. The wickedness here displayed is marked—

Thirdly: By *inhumanity*. "*And the king of Babylon . . . he carried out thence all the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king's house, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the Lord, as the Lord had said. And he carried away all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and all the mighty men of valour, even ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths: none remained, save the poorest sort of the people of the land. And he*

carried away Jehoiachin to Babylon, and the king's mother, and the king's wives, and his officers, and the mighty of the land, those carried he into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon. And all the men of might, even seven thousand, and craftsmen and smiths a thousand, and all that were strong and apt for war, even them the king of Babylon brought captive to Babylon." He rifled the country of its people and its property, and inflicted untold misery on thousands. Thus wickedness transforms man into a fiend, and turns society into pandemonium. Man is the greatest devil of man. The wickedness here displayed is marked—

Fourthly: By *profanity*. We read here that he carried away all the treasures of the house of the Lord, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon had made in the temple thereof. We also read here that "*He burnt the house of the Lord. . . . And the pillars of brass that were in the house of the Lord, and the bases, and the brasen sea that was in the house of the Lord, did the Chaldees break in pieces, and carried the*

brass of them to Babylon. And the pots, and the shovels, and the snuffers, and the spoons, and all the vessels of brass wherewith they ministered, took they away. . . . The two pillars, one sea, and the bases which Solomon had made for the house of the Lord; the brass of all these vessels was without weight." Thus this ruthless despot desecrated the most holy things in the city of Jerusalem and in the memory of millions. He reduced the magnificent pile of buildings to ashes, and rifled it of its sacred and priceless treasures. Wickedness is essentially profane. It has no reverence, it crushes every sentiment of sanctity in the soul. Oh, sin, what hast thou done? Thou hast quenched the divinest instincts in human nature and poisoned the fountain of religious and social sympathies, substituted cruelty for love, tyranny for justice, blind superstition and blasphemous profanity for devotion.

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(To be continued.)

Seedlings.

The Seven Sayings from the Cross.

III.—Home Words.

“NOW THERE STOOD BY THE CROSS OF JESUS HIS MOTHER, AND HIS MOTHER’S SISTER, MARY THE WIFE OF CLEOPHAS, AND MARY MAGDALENE. WHEN JESUS THEREFORE SAW HIS MOTHER, AND THE DISCIPLE STANDING BY, WHOM HE LOVED, HE SAITH UNTO HIS MOTHER, WOMAN, BEHOLD THY SON ! THEN SAITH HE TO THE DISCIPLE, BEHOLD THY MOTHER ! AND FROM THAT HOUR THAT DISCIPLE TOOK HER UNTO HIS OWN HOME.”—*John* xix. 25-27.

THIS touching incident is recorded only in the Fourth Gospel. We may imagine with what deep emotion John would recall it in his old age, and what a solace he would derive from this sweet memory of a love stronger than death. The beautiful story embalms Christ’s third utterance from the Cross. Well might Augustine say: “The Crucified Man’s Cross is the Teacher’s Chair.” How much there is to learn at the Cross. This incident

I.—RECALLS OUR ATTENTION TO THE CHARACTER OF JESUS.

(a) He was never more completely *Himself* than when on the Cross. (b) “He retained unimpaired the serenity and majesty which had characterised Him throughout the Trial, and exhibited all those qualities which had

already made His character illustrious.” (c) There was a complete absence of self-assertion in Christ on the Cross. In this respect He was very much unlike many of the martyrs. But then He was no mere martyr. (d) Our Lord was a great sufferer—the very King of Sorrows—yet He triumphs over His sufferings by His thought of, and care for, others. (e) John would not be slow to recognise the identity of character as exhibited by the Christ in His life and at His death. (f) There was no acting at the Cross—all was natural, and in perfect keeping with Christ’s dignity and aim. (g) Never was Jesus so occupied that He could not comfort and help those who needed Him.

On the Cross and dying ! Yet praying, and thinking, and loving,

and comforting, and directing, and blessing to the end. How like Him, and He is our Saviour and Lord !

II.—HEIGHTENS OUR INTEREST IN MARY, THE MOTHER OF JESUS.

(a) *We do not find her much with Jesus during His ministry—* perhaps she was attending to home duties—but her faith in Him has increased and remained firm. (b) *She is doubtless now a widow, but her cup of sorrow is only now to overflow.* She is to understand the force of Simeon's words—"A sword shall pierce thy own soul also," at the Cross. (c) *She acts a mother's part at the Cross,* for is it not mother-like to wish to be near a dying Son, to brave noise and, perhaps, scorn for His sake, and to restrain her feelings and maintain calmness at such a trying moment ? (d) *She receives from Jesus the tenderest consideration.* He knows what she most needs and provides all. A home—a strong arm—a companion—a spiritual helper. "The sympathy in their common loss is to be the source of their love to each other," to Mary and John. (e) *Christ's words are a guide to us in our treatment of many.* She is to have no undue regard, certainly no Divine reverence. Surely our Saviour foresaw the folly and blasphemy of the Church of Rome, and thus arms us against it.

III.—INVESTS WITH A PECULIAR GLORY THE WORDS "WOMAN"—"MOTHER"—"SON"—"HOME."

Read the thoughts which these words suggest in the light of the Cross, and they will be seen in their highest meaning.

1. "*Woman.*" Christianity gives woman her right place—teaches us to regard womanhood with jealous care and anxiety. The light of the Cross emancipates woman in heathen lands, and uplifts and blesses her in every land. A saved and consecrated woman reflects the glory which falls upon her from the Cross. She seeks to repay her debt of gratitude. Women were the last to pay homage to the Saviour during His earthly life ; they have ever since His resurrection been the foremost to honour Him by patient and devoted service.

2. "*Mother.*" The light of the Cross falling upon a mother brings into glorious prominence one of God's noblest works. "A Christian Mother !" What a world of meaning there is in those simple words, and many know it to their joy. Motherhood is robbed of half of its dignity, joy, blessedness, usefulness, and peace, if not linked to the light and love of Calvary.

A mother at prayer—teaching her children of Jesus—making sacrifices—giving up herself, these

are sights fit for angels. A study of this scene at the Cross ought to make a Christian of every mother in the land.

3. "*Son.*" The Cross makes "son" a name of greatest honour—a strength—a solace—a joy. John became a son to Mary for Jesus' sake; and a Christian son ought to be a model son.

Let us not forget that the words of Jesus to John and Mary teach us that: (*a*) Christian relationship is to be a reality—as truly as is that of mother and son. (*b*) In this life we are to render each other all possible help. (*c*) Even in what seem common, every-day matters, we are to take

our commands from the Christ of the Cross.

4. "*Home.*" The Cross and the Home." The words seem to suit each other. What wonders Christ and His Cross can do for the Home. Home is only half Home until Jesus enters. A Christian Home should be an earthly heaven. *Mary was provided with a Home at the Cross;* and only there can our homeless souls find true shelter. *Mary went from the Cross to her home;* and some day we who trust the Saviour shall be gently led from the suffering and pain of earth to the home-peace of heaven.

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IV.—The Forsaken Saviour.

"MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME."—*Matt.* xxvii. 46.

WE are contemplating the most wonderful death-scene the world has ever known. Every incident in it is unique—every word fraught with highest significance. Oh, for mind and heart to understand and profit. Three hours of darkness! Who can penetrate that gloom? It enwrapt profoundest mysteries, which even faith may only know in part. It

would seem to have been during the darkness that Christ felt as though He were God-forsaken, and that just as the light broke He uttered the cry, "My God, My God, why didst Thou forsake Me?" (R.V.) Note—

I.—THAT THE WORDS OF JESUS WERE THOSE OF THE OPENING OF THE TWENTY-SECOND PSALM.

1. *In His dying agony He*

found relief in the Scripture. Doubtless He repeated the whole psalm, with which He must have been familiar. And still, as a mirror of human experiences and a Divine solace in hours of human pain, there is no book like the Bible.

2. *There is something significant in the very title of this psalm taken in its reference to Christ, "Hind of the morning." "Hunted, persecuted one, pursued to the death, on whom the light of morning rises." (See Dr. Kay.)*

3. *That the psalm is Messianic there can be no doubt.* "Both the suffering and the triumph are too great to allow of any doubt as to the psalm being strictly prophetic of the Son of David." And Jesus would call attention to the fact. Other parts of the psalm were now being fulfilled—vv. 7, 15, 16, 18. These words were not spoken in a whisper. The loud crying out of this Scripture from the cross ought to have startled and convicted the Jews.

II.—THIS CRY FROM THE CROSS MAY BE REVERENTLY EXAMINED.

1. *It was uttered by Christ in the dialect of His childhood—(Aramaic) and certainly breathes the spirit of a child, for—*

2. *It addressed God in the language of confidence, "My God."* This fact is too often overlooked. Only *faith* will and can thus speak

to the Divine Being. In a sense, the bond between the Father and Son was *strained*, but it was far from being *severed*.

3. *It refers to an experience of deep distress.* Christ had been given up to the hands of men. They had done their worst and God had not interfered.

4. *But the cry is not one of cowardice, impatience, or despair.* Only a blind and daring scepticism could ever have alleged this. The very opposite is the case.

5. *Yet the cry is one of surprise and conscious innocence.* This was a new experience for Christ. The Father seemed to be removed from Him. Earth insulted Him and Heaven made no reply. Christ knew He did not personally deserve this treatment, for He always did the Father's will.

6. *The cry is a prayer.* Jesus asks "that a clear sense of the great purpose of His desertion may be kept alive in Him." "Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Every word is emphatic. "*Why—hast THOU—FORSAKEN—ME?*"

III.—THIS CRY STARTS THE GREAT ENQUIRY FOR ALL THE AGES.

1. *It was surely uttered in order to stir our deepest thoughts.* Not merely to give vent to Christ's feelings.

2. *It tells the great truth that Christ was left alone in the dark—*

ness. Alone as man—high-priest—sin-bearer.

3. *But this could not have been on account of any personal guilt.* It was no reflection upon, or visitation of Him. "He did no sin." He was "the Lamb without spot or blemish."

4. *Christ was "tasting death" for us.* Spiritual death means separation from God. He was being "made a curse for us," and could not at that moment enjoy to the full communion with God.

5. *Christ was vicariously enduring the penalty due for our sins.* "He bore our sins in His own body on the tree." He suffered as if He were Himself the criminal. "He was made sin for us." Was He feeling in any degree, as those must who will be abandoned by God because they have rejected His great salvation?—"Depart from Me." For a small moment God forsook Christ,

that in great mercy He might gather us for whom Christ died.

6. *Christ knew perfectly "why" He had been forsaken,* but He would have all men to examine the mystery and to know their own personal relation to it. *This great "why" still demands attention.* We shall never be able fully to enter into its meaning, yet may we by faith partake of its purchased blessings. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." May we never by our folly and unbelief bring upon ourselves the bitter experience of abiding in the darkness and finding God "far from the words of our roaring."

7. *May our best thoughts gather more and more about the cross,* and as we look, and listen, and linger, may we become "crucified with Christ," and prove the power of His death to give unto us eternal life.

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Days of the Christian Year.

Matthew vii. 18.

(*The Eighth Sunday after Trinity.*)

"A GOOD TREE CANNOT BRING FORTH EVIL FRUIT."

IN this strong and energetic language our Lord reminds us—

I.—THAT AS MEN ARE SO WILL THEY ACT. The *spirit* men are of,

the *character* they have formed, the *principles* they hold and honour, these will decide their behaviour and give the tone and tune of their life. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth will speak. From the evil heart proceed not only evil thoughts

but murders, adulteries, &c., all the evil deeds which men do (Luke vi. 45; Matt. xv. 19). The fountain must determine the stream. If a man fears God, honours Jesus Christ, loves the divine law, has regard to his neighbour's rights as well as to his own "interests," he *must* act honourably and conscientiously, at home, in his business, in society, in the church.

II.—THAT THIS IS THE LIGHT IN WHICH MEN ARE CERTAIN TO JUDGE US. They will be very little affected by the composition of our *creed*; they will make short work of our *professions*; they will estimate our worth, or our unworthiness, by the temper and spirit we are displaying and by the principles we are illustrating in the transactions of daily life.

III.—THAT THERE ARE SOME APPARENTLY STRONG AND NUMEROUS EXCEPTIONS TO THIS CHRISTIAN RULE. 1. There will always be the hypocrite and the self-deceiver, —men who, intentionally or unconsciously, will hide a guilty heart beneath a correct or even a devout exterior. 2. Some genuinely good men will still be "overtaken in a fault," or even in a crime, as David was in his day and Peter in his. 3. Some men who, upon the whole, are upright and estimable, will be found to have seriously defective characters; to be capable

of saying and doing that which is unwise, unworthy, injurious.

IV.—THAT IT IS A QUESTION OF EARNEST AND DEVOUT ENDEAVOUR. Human goodness is not so much an attainment as a pursuit; not so much a possession of Christian graces as a devout aspiration and a determined effort to acquire them. The *admirableness* of a man's character is to be distinguished from its *intrinsic excellence*: the former may be great while the latter is comparatively small: for the former depends on the starting point from which he set out on his Christian course, and also on the measure of healthy and helpful influences which have been breathing on him every day since he began his race. But the true man, unlike the false, will be constantly striving after the pure, the true, the generous, the Christ-like, and he will be continually moving towards his goal. Here are— 1. A safe criterion by which to try ourselves; are we making this earnest effort? 2. A sound criterion by which to judge our neighbours; are they, though very imperfect and even faulty, seeking and striving after that which is worthy? 3. An incentive to a consistent and beautiful life. We shall do little or nothing for Christ our Saviour, for man our brother, except the profession of godliness we make be sustained by a life

that stands strong against the winds of temptation and is adorned with the beauties of holiness.

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1 Corinthians x. 12.

(*Ninth Sunday after Trinity.*)

(EPISTLE FOR DAY.)

"WHEREFORE LET HIM THAT THINKETH HE STANDETH TAKE HEED LEST HE FALL."

ST. PAUL is here using a page of the history of the children of Israel for the highest spiritual purposes. Showing the fellowship of men of different lands and centuries in the great experiences of life, he is especially marking a strong and destructive temptation which, in its power to overcome those whom it smote in the desert pilgrimage, is an indication of its ruinous effects on many of all lands and times. It is not my purpose now so much to note the special form of this temptation, as to suggest the spirit (as our text points to it) in which men easily become the prey of every form of temptation; whether gross and sensual, as that of the Jews, or refined and subtle, as many that to-day befall us. Fixing our eye rather on the teaching of our text, than on this entire page of Jewish tragedy, we notice—

I.—THAT MAN IS EVER IN DANGER OF A MORAL "FALL." Whatever else the record of what we popularly call "The Fall" may teach us, it is certainly an instructive warning of what is possible any day of our lives. No state on earth (even though it seems to be a Paradise) is so holy, or so happy, as to place us above the reach of temptation and the possibility of fall. The Jews spelt that awful word—word with hells of woe in it—in the desert; Adam and Eve spelt it in Paradise. To all it meant the same. (*a*) A departure from the morally erect attitude of heart that God designed for man. (*b*) A prostration of the manhood that was meant to be upright, vigorous in goodness. This, we say, is possible to all. There are influences everywhere at work that make for man's unrighteousness, that tend to his swerving from his true course, his lapsing from his right course. There is no garden here, be it Church, College, or even Home, that has not a serpent in it, a strong, sinuous, slimy temptation to wrong. It is true of sin, as the poet says it is of sorrow,—

"The darkest shade falls on the sunniest spot."

II.—THAT THERE ARE MEN WHO CONSIDER THEMSELVES ABOVE THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH A MORAL "FALL." Of such an one Paul

speaks as of "him who thinketh he standeth." Such men abound. They consider themselves as safe whoever is in peril; as "standing," whoever is falling. This misconception arises (a) *From a faulty moral standard.* If that is flexible and swerves, and sinks, he cannot tell whether or no he is standing or falling. A ship at sea does not measure her course by another ship in motion, or still less by ever restless waves, but by steady star, or massive headland, or fixed lighthouse, or anchored lightship. So we must measure our moral distances by the inflexible and inviolable. (b) *From inattention to the true standard, even though it be recognised.* (c) *From self delusion as to one's own condition.* There are moral anodynes, moral intoxicants, and under their influence many a backslider is unconscious of his egregious lapses from right, and so considers himself in no danger though at the very moment he is falling.

III.—THAT SUCH MEN ARE IN THE GREATEST DANGER OF A MORAL FALL. Such an one may well "take heed." All may; even those who really are standing. But especially those who "think" they are standing. It is the self-consciousness that this "thinking" involves, the self-satisfaction it implies, the self-gratulation it engenders that is the source of

peril. No traveller is so likely to "stumble on the dark mountains" of life as the Pharisee. His whole attitude and temper conspire to imperil his spiritual safety. It is not to the man who "stands," but to the man who "*thinketh* he standeth" that we may well cry with all earnest warning; for every moment his foot is on the edge of a tremendous precipice. "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall."

EDITOR.

1 Corinthians xii. 4 and 6.

(The Tenth Sunday after Trinity.)

"DIVERSITIES OF GIFTS, BUT THE SAME SPIRIT."

"DIVERSITIES OF WORKINGS, BUT THE SAME GOD."

THESE words suggest practical reflections as to— I.—THE VAST VARIETY OF CLASSES FOR WHOM CHRISTIAN WORK IS CARRIED ON. Such work is work (1) for all varieties of *need*. (a) For *bodily* needs. The hospital; the sanitary enterprise of any form is included. (b) For *mental* needs. All true educational work, not least of all when it aims at fixing a ladder that shall rise from the gutter to the University, is included. (c) For *moral* needs. Every crusade for Temperance, *e.g.* Blue Ribbon Army; and every crusade for

Chastity, *e.g.* the White Cross Army is included. (*d*) For *spiritual* needs. The proclamation, in its manifold fulness, of the Gospel that converts and comforts and edifies is included. (*e*) For *national* needs. Right endeavour in the cause of Peace, of Land Reform, &c., is included. But such work is (2) For the needs of people of *all ages*,—the child, the youth, the adult, the aged. And (3) For the needs of people of *all places*. The prediction as to the usefulness of the men of the early Church (Acts i. 8) seems to hint at what we call (*a*) *city* missions,—“witnesses for Me in *Jerusalem*”: (*b*) *home* missions,—“and in all *Judea*”: (*c*) *colonial* missions,—“and in *Samaría*”: (*d*) *foreign* missions,—“and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

II.—THE VAST VARIETY OF MEANS BY WHICH CHRISTIAN WORK IS CARRIED ON. There are methods in which the individualism of the individual is a potent force, and others in which the elaborate machinery fulfils a useful function. There are spheres for highest culture, and others for simplest speech; domains for the pen and for the tongue. True Christian enterprise is hydra-handed. It touches with a different touch the unnumbered strings on the great harp of humanity; sometimes gently, as with the delicacy of

woman's fingers, and sometimes mightily, as with the smiting of a seraph's hand.

III.—THE ONE MOTIVE SPIRIT UNDER WHOSE INFLUENCE CHRISTIAN WORK IS CARRIED ON. There is “one Spirit.” This is so notwithstanding all we have suggested as to variety of needs that are met, and variety of methods that are employed. And it is so, moreover, notwithstanding vast variety of shades of opinion. In all and through all who are true to Christ there is one impelling motive; *i.e.*, love to Him. This is the great unifying force at the central heart of all Christly men. This oneness in motive will at last find its full fruition in oneness of result, when

“Man in the sunshine of the world's
new spring
Shall walk in glory like some holy
thing.”

EDITOR.

1 Corinthians xv. 3.

(*The Eleventh Sunday after Trinity.*)

“I DELIVERED UNTO YOU FIRST OF ALL . . . HOW THAT CHRIST DIED FOR OUR SINS ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES.”

IN the great argument this chapter contains the apostle lays the greatest stress on the *Facts* of the Gospel. He insists that the first

duty he had discharged towards the Corinthians had been to "deliver" to them these great facts; and first among these facts was the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. Dwelling on *The First Great Theme of a Preacher*, we enquire why is it that our Lord's death is the central topic of Christianity, the foundation fact of the Gospel. There are at least four reasons.

I.—THE DEATH OF CHRIST IS AN UNANSWERABLE PROOF OF HIS REAL HUMANITY. He is not, as an early heresy dreamt, a mere phantasm man; simply in "the form of man"; too high for fellowship, too exalted for imitation. To have even a suspicion of this is to destroy the possibilities of Christian life. In much else, and emphatically in His dying, He proved Himself to be "The Son of Man." His death is His complete answer to our cry, "Art Thou become like as we are?" Here we learn with unmistakeable clearness the very initial lesson of Christianity, that as an *Example*, a *Friend*, in a word, a perfect *Redeemer*, our Lord became one of us. Hence we understand why Paul preached "first of all" that Christ died.

II.—THE DEATH OF CHRIST IS THE UTMOST UTTERANCE OF DIVINE LOVE. "God was in Christ." Gazing on Christ's life we see Divine love in *lowly con-*

descension; in *unwearied toil*; in *tender sympathy*; in *agonised yearnings*; but now we see love in *sacrificial death*. A love than that "is wonderful, passing the love of woman"; a love "that many waters cannot quench." Just as the highest obedience of man to God is seen in Abraham's offering up his son, his only son; so the uttermost love of God to man is seen in His "sparing not His only begotten Son." Because man's belief in God's love is the very origin of the religious life in him we understand why "first of all" Paul preached that Christ died.

III.—THE DEATH OF CHRIST IS THE CLIMAX OF SACRIFICE FOR HUMAN SIN. We should ever emphasise that Christ's death is the *climax* of His sacrifice; only the climax, for all that preceded was sacrifice. But a climax according to His own teaching, for did He not speak of it as "My hour," "the hour." "His blood" is His poured out life,—a life that was ever being poured out, but that emptied itself in His death. It is to be proclaimed that "Christ died for our sins *according to the scriptures*." Not in our theologies, ancient, mediæval, or modern, but in "the scriptures" we are to find the light that shall illumine the mystery of the cross. These Old Testament scriptures, to which

only of course Paul referred, bearing on the death of Christ, may be grouped thus: (1) *Figures from commercial life*. "Bought with a price"; "purchased with His own blood." (2) *Figures from political life*. "Redemption"; "Ransom." (3) *Figures from judicial life*. "Wounded for our transgressions," &c. (4) *Figures from Jewish ceremonial observances*. "Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." "Blood of sprinkling." Besides these, our New Testament scriptures, in the parables, and direct statements of Christ, and also in the arguments and references of His apostles, have much more to say about the death of our Lord. Altogether there is abundant reason here for understanding why "first of all" Paul preached that "Christ died for our sins."

IV.—THE DEATH OF CHRIST IS THE MIGHTIEST FORCE IN THE SALVATION OF THE WORLD. This follows from all we have said. But we may well ponder on the great truth that Christ's cross is not only the symbol of sacrifice but the source of sovereignty; and the second because the first. This is the deep meaning of our Lord's own words, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me." This is verified in the experience (1) of *individuals*; (2) of *the world*.

EDITOR.

Mark vii. 34.

(*Twelfth Sunday after Trinity.*)

"AND LOOKING UP TO HEAVEN, HE SIGHED, AND SAITH UNTO HIM, EPHPHATHA, THAT IS, BE OPENED."

THERE is a microscopic fulness of meaning in this record of one of the innumerable deeds and feelings of our Lord's life. What a combination of the Divine and human, the simple and the mysterious. There is (a) *Divinity* revealed. The cure here effected. Beyond mortal power to do. A "miracle." (b) *Humanity*. Natural emotions, actions, and signs exhibited. (c) *Simplicity*. For we think it only natural and harmonious that the Lord from heaven should ever "look up to heaven." (d) *Mystery*. For why should the great Healer, on the eve of working a blessed deed "sigh." Consider a few of the thoughts suggested by the Saviour's sigh:—

I.—THE PERFECTION OF HIS HUMANITY. A very obvious truth. But like so many plain truths apt to be forgotten or weakened. Distorted views and heresies have arisen from forgetting this fact. So many people think of Christ's humanity as something different from their own; as if He lived and moved in a different sphere and under different laws. Christ possessed body *and* soul. Enforce this. Not merely a temple "in-

haunted by Godhead." "*Reasonable* soul and human flesh subsisting." How much closer this brings us to Him; how much more real does He become to our minds and hearts. A valuable testimony to this truth is the record that the Lord "sighed." Note that "sighing" may be only an evidence of the *weakness* of humanity. Sighs arise from many causes. (a) *Disappointment*. (b) *Discontent*. (c) *Incapacity*. (d) *Reluctance* to do the work sought. None of these of course were the cause of Christ's sighing. There are sighs that evidence the *strength* of our humanity. The proof of our aiming after higher things. A testimony to earth's insufficiency and to our boundless capacity for feeling and work. Such, *e.g.*, at times of prayer, words too feeble, &c. Christ's sigh was such. Natural outpouring of a perfect human soul. It was the expression of a prayer too large for "words" and of "thoughts too deep for tears."

II.—THE INFINITE PATHOS OF HIS HEART. This sigh teaches how *real*, *intense*, and *personal* are the feelings the Lord bears to mankind. A wide difference between possessing a general idea of the evils and sorrows and sufferings of life, and coming into contact personally with such. (Illustrate from Howard's life.) Each

case where Christ showed forth His supernatural power is an illustration too of His mercy and love toward the sufferer personally. We may do good deeds to the suffering, &c., and yet not bear a personal regard or love for them. But our Lord did not thus act. Note how this sigh shows the (a) *Illimitable sympathy* of Christ. What is sympathy in its true and real meaning. Who can so fulfil its meaning as Christ. No loneliness in life if we remember this. We cannot be alone having such a sympathising Helper. What allowances, &c., He will make even for our failings, &c., which cause us to seek His pardon, &c. (b) *Compassion*. No "bitter cry" or "silent suffering" but He pities. Whatever we feel stirs the ripples upon the sea of His love and compassion. No stern, cold, unfeeling Being do we worship and adore. He is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities."

III.—THE INFINITE EARNESTNESS OF CHRIST'S LIFE PURPOSE AND MISSION. Great and self-sacrificing workers may sigh when they think of (1) The greatness of their work: (2) The poverty of their means: (3) The opposition engendered, &c. The will to do but the means lacking. "Would that more could be done." Do we not feel this at times,—the more so the nearer we draw to

God, the more we see what life really is and what it ought to be. Do we not enter, *e.g.*, into Jeremiah's weeping, &c. Far beyond us and all other of the world's workers and saviours did Christ feel this "burden of life." We cannot even faintly understand what He felt, for He was *more* than human. He could take in the sufferings of the whole race at one glance. He could see all the present and future *possibilities* for good and evil in every soul. He knew the *privileges* granted and neglected. Here this one sufferer only a type of the human race spiritually. And then the *cause*

of all this bodily and spiritual pain He knew and measured as none but He could do. Well might He "sigh," but it is the expression of the constraining and burning earnestness within. It is but the illustration of His whole life and the commencement of that work which was finished on Calvary. It is part of the "seeking and saving the lost," and the opening of the way to another life and world where "sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

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DEGREES OF LIFE.—"Things are not wholly alive or wholly dead. They are less or more alive. Take the nearest, most easily examined instance—the life of a flower. Notice what a different degree and kind of life there is in the calyx and in the corolla. The calyx is nothing but the swaddling clothes of the flower; the child blossom is bound in it hand and foot—guarded in it, restrained by it—till the time of birth. The shell is hardly more subordinate to the germ in the egg than the calyx to the blossom. It bursts at last, but it never lives as the corolla does. It may fall at the moment its task is fulfilled, as in the poppy; or wither gradually, as in the buttercup; or persist in a ligneous apathy after the flower is dead, as in the rose; or harmonise itself so as to share in the aspect of the real flower, as in the lily; but it never shares in the corolla's bright passion of life. And the gradations which thus exist between the different members of organic creatures, exist no less between the different ranges of organism. We know no higher or more energetic life than our own; but there seems to me this great good in the idea of gradation of life; it admits the idea of a life above us, in other creatures, as much nobler than ours as ours is nobler than that of the dust."—RUSKIN.

Breviaries.

The Transfiguration.

"AND IT CAME TO PASS ABOUT AN EIGHT DAYS AFTER THESE SAYINGS, HE TOOK PETER AND JOHN AND JAMES, AND WENT UP INTO A MOUNTAIN TO PRAY," &c.—*Luke ix. 28-36.*

LOOKING at the human side, the Transfiguration has practical lessons we may well learn. I.—CHRIST SELECTED THREE TO BE WITH HIM. This was not accidental, for we find that the same three were chosen on other occasions. The reason then must be in their greater fitness for the revelation. Doubtless they possessed larger sympathies and deeper spiritual insight than the rest of the Twelve. Now Christian life is far more to some than to others. Some Christians find God everywhere, and the smallest events aid them in the divine life. To others life comes with dull monotony, and its greatest opportunities have little inspiration. And these are apt to grumble as if they had been unfairly treated, and were not themselves to blame for the poorness of their Christian experience. As well might one who had refused to study music say that there was nothing in some masterpiece just because he could not understand it. The vision of Christ we have, depends upon the point to which our spiritual life has developed. His revelation of Himself is ever limited by our power to receive. There are visions and voices of Christ everywhere, could we but see and hear them. II.—THEY DID NOT GRASP CHRIST'S PURPOSE, AND PARTLY LOST THE OPPORTUNITY. They slept, and so did they when they should have watched with Him in the garden. Excuses might possibly be made for them; but if Christ could watch and pray surely they might have done the same. They did as men often do, lost one of life's great openings because they were not watchful, seeking. The smallest work for Christ, or the poorest prayer meeting, may become the door through which we enter into realisation of new truth and clearer vision of Christ. No voice from heaven announces the great possibility. Along the line of the apparently small and commonplace it comes one day to the faithful servant who is ever obeying the Master's command—"Watch." III.—CHRIST TOOK THEM BACK FROM THE VISION TO DUTY. "Good to

be here.' Yes, but not to stay. Down below are multitudes to be taught and devils to be cast out. Life is not to consist of visions and ecstatic experiences. It is good to have them, but from them we should go back to every-day duty better fitted for it. Here the mystics failed. The power and inspiration we get on the mount with Christ we should carry with us into all life's work. If not, our Christian life will degenerate into the mere enjoyment of mercies that serve no useful purpose. Like the monk, in "The Legend Beautiful," we shall find that he who is constantly faithful to duty is he who has most constantly the Beatific Vision.

SLOUGH.

FRANK SMITH.

Spiritual Waymarks.

"SET THEE UP WAYMARKS."—*Jer.* xxxi. 21.

THESE words follow repentance and promise : repentance on the part of Ephraim, promise on the part of God, "I will surely have mercy upon him saith the Lord." The true order is still preserved, God's love first, man's follows. First the Divine forbearance, then the yielding. God's love has no breaks in it, is one continuous chain, the links of which are "goodness and mercy." Memory is treacherous, forgets the old mercies and favours past. "If I forget thee O Jerusalem," shows possibility. Hence instruction follows hard upon mercy : in the pilgrimage of return from captivity "set thee up waymarks." Here is an invitation—I.—To FOLLOW AN ANCIENT CUSTOM. Not all old customs bad, the good filtrates through all time. Observe, Jacob sets up his Bethel and repairs to it again in after years. Joshua takes twelve stones from the bed of the Jordan, and sets them up in Gilgal as a memorial. Between Mizpeh and Shem Samuel erected his Ebenezer. We learn that it is a holy duty to follow in the good, tried paths of the "just men made perfect." II.—To KEEP ALIVE OUR SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES. While faith obeys implicitly, aids are not rejected. To recount becomingly our experiences serves two ends, we *put God* in remembrance ; we *keep Him* in remembrance. Our experiences may be such as (1) past grace received—(a) the grace *to know* (b) and the grace *to love*. (2) Past strength renewed. (3) Wonderful deliverance from fears. (4) Help in trouble. (5) Times of sweet communion. Thus we put in practise the word, "forget not all His benefits."

III.—TO PUT UP LASTING MEMORIALS. Jacob's pillow has long since gone; Joshua's stones have tumbled down; Samuel's Ebenezer has crumbled away, only the names and recorded deeds remain. We may set up something more enduring than stone or iron. All our *spiritual privileges* may be as waymarks set up. Blessed hours of devotion and times of sweet communion. The Gospel of a *holy life in the common lot* is as a waymark. These, though seen, go with the unseen which abideth for ever. IV.—TO HAVE A REGARD FOR POSTERITY. Other pilgrims are on the way. To such the world is not to be a blank, or destitute of voices. Sinners will need directing, saints will require comforting, workers with flagging energies must be stimulated. Then set up your "waymarks." The record of our experience will stand out like mile-stones, and all shall be as inspiring testimony to the faithfulness of Him who has promised neither to "leave us" nor "forsake us."

HEREFORD.

JOHN JONES.

The God of the Night.

"THE NIGHT ALSO IS THINE."—*Psalms lxxiv. 16.*

WE may regard night— I.—AS A DIVISION OF TIME. Here we note that it is a division of time that is (1) *The First*, (2) *Natural*, (3) *Universal*, (4) *Beneficent*. "The dews of the night heal the wounds of the day." II.—AS THE PRODUCT AND POSSESSION OF GOD. The old heresy of a god of good in conflict with a god of evil, is far remote from the Jewish, and, if possible, still further from the Christian faith. Of storm as well as of calm, of night as well as of day, God is at once the Source and Sovereign. Think of night (1) as the *product* of God. "Thou makest darkness, and it is night." All we have already said as to the originality, naturalness, universality, and beneficence of night testifies to this. For He is "the Giver of every good gift." (2) As the *possession* of God. It belongs to Him. His creatorship involves His ownership, and His ownership implies His rightful control. Our meditation is, First: *A lesson for the regulation of conduct*. We are constrained to be careful of this product and possession of God. And hence we prayerfully ponder (1) *The wise use of night*.

What is its design, its primal function? Rest. They who flagrantly ignore this purpose will find, sooner or later, how exquisite was the Divine wisdom that arranged the shade and stillness of night, and how crass the human folly that despised that arrangement. For nature will have her bills paid, and often with heavy interest. (2) The *righteous* use of night. All employment of the darkness for concealment and deceit is an abuse of a choice gift of God and an insult to the Giver. Our meditation is, Second: *A message for the consolation of human sorrows.* The natural night is God's, and all the nights of which it is a type are under God's control. Our nights of pain, perplexity, bereavement, death, are they not (1) *Ordained* by God. (2) *Relieved* by God. "He giveth songs in the night." There are stars in our mental and moral firmament which God has kindled. (3) To be *terminated* by God. The earth wheels round into the day again. So shall our souls. "Watchman, what of the night?" "The *morning* cometh."

EDITOR.

Conversion.

"AND MANY THAT BELIEVED CAME, AND CONFESSED, AND SHEWED
THEIR DEEDS," &c.—*Acts* xix. 18, 19.

THIS text proves the power of the Gospel in the conversion of these "exorcists." The Gospel is the greatest power on earth. The Gospel alone acts on the heart to change it and renew the man after the image of God. And this is accomplished without any earthly weapon. The idea of the world to subdue and conquer, is through force to subdue or crush the body; it cares but little for the mind. The Gospel begins with the inner man first, making men "willing in the day of His power"; then the knee bends in prayer as naturally as by the law of cause and effect. This is the "philosophy" of the Gospel. "And I, if I be lifted up, will *draw* all men to Myself." I.—THE NATURE OF CONVERSION. It is not conviction. One may be convinced of sin without being converted. Conviction is the first step in conversion; conversion is conviction completed. A man may be convinced and yet carry his "bosom sin" with him unto the end of life; but conversion implies a turning away from sin, an inward change, so that sin is cast away as our most bitter enemy. Conversion does not change the original faculties of the soul. Whether a

man be of a sanguine nature, or cool and calculative, it does not change this, but sanctifies the whole man for the service of Christ. Balaam was convinced but not converted. The Pharisees, who brought the "woman taken in adultery" to the temple, were convinced by their own consciences, but not converted. Felix was convinced—that caused the trembling,—but he put it off to a more convenient season, which never came. He was not converted. Conviction is a light from heaven upon the soul to show a man his sin ; but conversion is a change of mind, a new heart and a new life. The Bible attaches great importance to this. "Sinners shall be converted unto Thee." "Except a man be converted he *cannot* enter into the kingdom of heaven." "He that converteth a sinner from the error of his ways, saveth a soul from death." There is a law in God's spiritual world drawing the converted man to heaven as truly as the spark flyeth upwards. II.—THE SIGNS OF TRUE CONVERSION. Anxious people often ask, "How can I know that I am converted?" Our Saviour answers this—"By their fruits ye shall know them." (1) *By a spirit of prayerfulness.* Christ said of Saul, after his conversion, "Behold he prayeth." Of the hypocrite it is said, "Will he always call upon God?" No ; only in time of danger ; that is cowardly. "The goodness of God" tends "to lead us to repentance." Prayer is the breath of the regenerated man. The first words that fell from the prodigal's lips were, "Father, I have sinned,"—a sign of true repentance. "Every one that is godly prayeth unto Thee," it is his delight. (2) *By joining in Christian fellowship.* We would not limit God's power to save men outside the Christian church ; but as in nature, so in grace. "Like seeks like," "similar natures meet." If a man is converted he will seek the fellowship of Christians. Saul, after he was converted, assayed to join himself to the disciples. "He that is not with Me is against Me," said Christ. If we are "ashamed" to "confess" Him, we are not with Him. (3) *By forsaking evil ways.* These exorcists rejoiced to see the "books" which had been a snare and a curse to them destroyed by the flames. The things which were "gain" to them they "counted loss for Christ." (4) *By delight in God's Word.* By reading we gather food for the soul ; by meditating we assimilate it, so that it becomes a part of ourselves. "Thy words were found, and I did eat them"—then to "grow in grace." III.—THE NECESSITY OF CONVERSION. It is necessary (1) In order to be *happy*. (2) In order to be *useful* in Christ's vineyard. (3) In order to *attain heaven* at last.

The Sun of Righteousness.

“UNTO YOU THAT FEAR MY NAME SHALL THE SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS
ARISE WITH HEALING IN HIS WINGS.”—*Malachi* iv. 2.

WHATEVER may have been the conscious conception of the prophet here, it is very evident that these words are a sublime description of the person and the work of Him who is “The Light of the World.” I.—THE BLESSINGS CHRIST IMPARTS, like those of the sun, ARE OF THE UTMOST VALUE. A sunless landscape is less dismal than a Christless soul; whilst a Christly soul has on it “a light that never shone on sea or land.” The blessings of the natural sun and of The Christ are, in many respects, similar. 1. They are *enlightening*. Sunrise means daylight. 2. They are *restorative*. “Healing,”—for does not the sun’s influence on drooping flower, and faded face of human weakness but hint Christ’s influence on men’s hearts and lives? II.—THE BLESSINGS CHRIST IMPARTS, like those of the sun, COME TO MEN IN A REMARKABLE MANNER. The sunrise, and these “wings,” combine to suggest (1) *certainty*; (2) *stillness*; (3) *gentleness*; (4) *swiftness*. So Christ blesses.

“He saw, and oh, amazing grace!
He ran to our relief.”

III.—THE BLESSINGS CHRIST IMPARTS, like those of the sun, BRING BENEFITS THAT, IN A LARGE DEGREE, ARE UNIVERSAL. The sun shines on the evil and on the good. What spot of earth does it not, directly or indirectly, reach and bless? So many of Christ’s blessings bless all. Is there not through Him (1) *prolonged probation for the whole human race*? (2) “*Means of grace*” for multitudes still sinners? (3) *Holy influences* of thought and character that restrain and that tend to elevate? IV.—THE BLESSINGS CHRIST IMPARTS, like those of the sun, DEMAND SPECIAL CONDITIONS FOR THEIR FULL APPROPRIATION. The best cultivated soil will best utilise the heat and light of the sun. So the soul that in steadfast faith and love turns to The Christ, and with intense desires drinks in all His truth and grace, will be the soul on which will be most evident the healing influences of the Great Sun of Righteousness. EDITOR.

Pulpit Handmaids.

THE LIFE EDUCATION OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

I propose for my subject THE NATURE AND CONDUCT OF THAT LATER AND AMPLER TRAINING OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTER WHICH BEGINS WITH HIS ENTRANCE UPON REAL LIFE.

Passing by other points of interest, and taking up my position in the central space left free, I should like to say something gathered from my own experience on THE SOURCES AND AIMS OF THAT FREER SELF-EDUCATION AND WIDER CULTURE WHICH THE PASTOR MUST CARRY ON FROM YEAR TO YEAR IN THE STUDY, IN THE PARISH, AND IN THE WORLD, so as to develop his powers to the utmost, and equip himself more fully for his ministerial work.

I proceed upon the distinct understanding that in no proper sense of the word does the minister's education end with his college classes or his entrance upon the duties of his profession. I beseech you to clear your minds, and keep them clear, of any taint of heresy on this cardinal point. "Finality" should be dismissed from the vocabulary of the student as relentlessly as "impossibility" from that of the soldier; and that more especially when the limit of progress lies so pitifully near the starting-point, and so far in the rear of all high-hearted travellers. He must indeed have a very low conception of the nature of the ministerial office, as well as a very contracted and childish view of life, who can fancy for a moment that the close of the university course brings with it any release or relaxation from the labours and responsibilities of mental drill, or that licence or ordination simply marks the boundary-line between preparation and practice. In one sense indeed it is evident, to the extent of being a mere commonplace, that whether we know it or not, and whether we recognise it or not, our education will not and *cannot* there stand still. Outward circumstances will mould us; the pressure of daily duties and routine labours will leave their mark upon us; the years as they pass on will carry us with them, touching our minds and characters with soft but plastic hand. It may seem something like profanation to apply the name of *education* to a process like this, in which the subject of it is so unconscious and passive, where the development is so mechanical and

limited, where the movement consists in simply drifting listlessly down the stream, and the idea of a mental and moral gymnastic is exchanged for that of tame submission to the force of circumstances. Yet, without a clear view of what shape and course that later, freer education should assume, and without a strong sense of our risks and responsibilities with regard to it, *that* is the poor, wretched changeling that will inevitably take the place of the rightful owner, and oust him from his seat ; that will be the poor, starved, meagre fruit of all those precious years. . . .

The education whose materials and methods we are considering, must be *systematic and intelligently directed, like the education in the school and in the university*. The work of self-culture and discipline must be felt and dealt with as a grave, earnest work, built up and constructed on broad and well-marked lines, and carried out with clear head and resolute purpose.

I would desire to mark this with *special emphasis*, and press it upon your attention with special earnestness, because I feel that I am here laying my finger upon one of the weakest points of our ecclesiastical system, and upon one of the most formidable dangers of our ministerial life ; because I believe that, humanly speaking, we have here the most clamant want of our age and Church—the surest remedy of our ecclesiastical evils. For in addition to the tendencies rooted in human nature, and the influences inseparable from human life (and therefore common to all Churches and all positions), which engender and foster a spirit of indolence, and mechanical, perfunctory discharge of duty, lowering the tone of enthusiasm and the ideal of professional excellence, there are certain temptations and certain circumstances which in our case render fidelity to our grand ideal specially difficult, and at the same time specially imperative. . . .

If, amid the universal rise of the educational level, the increasing advance of the scientific spirit, the growth of the æsthetic cravings, the competition of Churches, and the ever-deepening complexities of the problems of modern life, our Church recognises the day of its visitation, and our ministers gird themselves up like men to grapple with and overcome the difficulties of that arduous and inspiring work, the weapons, under God, must be sought in the armoury of such a lofty, many-sided, all-pervading culture ; and the victory must be won by soldiers who have subjected all their powers and energies to this stern, patient, varied discipline. I believe that on the recognition and fulfilment, or the ignoring and neglect, of this God-imposed condition, depends, humanly

speaking, the success or failure, the growth or decay, of all ecclesiastical agencies. . . . The work of the ministry stands out pre-eminent above all others in this: that it calls into play every part of our complex human nature—that whatever enriches and enlarges our *humanity*, whatever ennobles and invigorates the *man*, contributes directly to the efficiency of the *minister*. . . .

It seems to me that the ideal of the *perfect minister* would just be the *perfectly developed Christian man*; and that in proportion as this development is universal and complete, will the reality approach the ideal. I do not say there may not be infinite degrees of excellence far short of this perfection; but every defect or disproportion in this development marks a lower stage, and so far impairs the efficiency. Every step of progress towards that harmonious balance and noblest cultivation of *all* the powers, adds to the capital and motive-power through which the minister works his work and produces his results. That ministerial capital and material is, let us remember, no mere dexterity or accumulation of dexterities, no sums of acquired facilities, no single gift or aggregate of gifts, however distinguished or great: not in these, but in the man himself,—in the whole contents and impetus and spirit of the man—in the intellectual mass and force, in the moral tone and fibre, in the spiritual life and elevation of the man—in the fine balance and harmonious proportions of this rich, complex, many-sided whole. . . .

Remember what *the office of the Christian ministry* is, and what *the mission of the Christian minister* implies. You cannot set that ideal higher than God has set it, or than its own nature and duties set it. You cannot unduly magnify your office. You may degrade and vulgarise it by your partial and perverted conceptions of it, or by your one-sided and unworthy presentation of it. That is easily done; and many are but too successful in dragging it down to a low level, and distorting its noble features into a mean and ghastly caricature. But the true idea still remains unviolated and inviolable: a lofty inapproachable object for the strongest and the bravest to strive after—a veritable something to occupy the powers and fill the capacities of the most ambitious.

Whether you take into account the themes with which he has to deal, or the work he has to do; whether you have regard to the sphere in which he is called to move, or the motives and aims that should furnish the propelling and regulative forces of all his action,—it comes to the same. He, and he alone, by the very necessity of his position, is brought into contact with man and life in the noblest relations and most sacred

associations. He, and he alone, has, as the one occupation and duty of his life, to devote himself to objects and carry out a work which appeal to all the highest elements of our nature, and afford free play and ample exercise to all its loftiest powers. He has, by virtue, or rather by the beneficent compulsion, of his profession, to occupy himself earnestly and continually with such themes as,—the duties and destinies and hopes of man—the nature, working, and purposes of God—the mysteries and problems of existence—the means of lessening the sorrow and sin and moral corruption of the world, and of building up the ruins and healing the sicknesses of humanity.

He has to flood his own mind with all the light on these problems and objects which revelation, or history, or experience, or reason can shed. He has to gather up into his own heart all the varied influences which combine to give wisdom, love, and skill in interpreting these truths and applying these principles. He has to make a patient, large, loving study of the hard problems of life, the sad maladies of humanity, the wants and dangers of society, on the one hand—as well as of the healing powers at work, the divine remedies provided, the message of hope to be made known, on the other. Knowledge of every kind—knowledge that is acquired in the pages of books, in the society of men, in the scenes of life, and in the school of experience—is all needed. It cannot be too varied or too profound.

But *fullest, clearest knowledge is not enough*. He must not only know what the problem is, with all its conditions and bearings. He must not only know where the key is to be sought and found, how to distinguish it from all the plausible counterfeits, and how to fit it into the wards of the lock, so as to open the door of the secret place. That is not enough; for that of itself will never supply tact, wise insight, clear-eyed sympathy, personal influence, and spiritual power. Yet without these no man can act effectively or successfully as the interpreter of God, as guide and teacher of his fellow-men, as prophet of truth and physician of souls. His spiritual dynamics must have their source and root in his own character, and his own inner stores of light and life. He must bring to task a fully developed, a carefully cultivated, a richly complex personality, thoroughly penetrated with light, strongly throbbing with life, sweetened and purified by love, and overflowing with living forces. If he is to interpret God to man, he must touch both God and man. If he is to be a conductor to any soul or any society of the quickening, restoring influences which have their source in God and their object in man, he

must transmit them through the medium of a nature that is itself charged with these influences, and thrilling with these currents of spiritual vitality. If, like the old Jewish prophet, our prophets of modern times, the messengers of God, are to warm cold hearts and awaken dormant natures to life, they, like Elisha, must, so to speak, stretch themselves at full length upon the lifeless body, touching it at every point, and quicken the feeble spark that still lingers in the dying frame, by infusing through each part the glow of their own fervid nature. I do not know of any other sure specific. If you want to *give* light, you must first *have* light. If you would *kindle* life, you must first *possess* life. If you would communicate moral and spiritual impulses, you must first gather these impulses into yourselves. If you would exercise effectively the arduous functions of the Christian ministry, it must be not merely by enouncing valuable truth, diffusing accurate knowledge, employing wise methods, and setting in motion skilful machinery, but by the power of truths that have been appropriated and incorporated; by the attraction of a spirit that has entered into and impregnated the very blood and texture of your being; by the influence of a life that is itself fed continuously by secret, unfailing springs of life. These are the bare, bald outlines of what the Christian ministry is in its divine ideal.

And now, looking to this sketch of the work and mission of the Christian minister, it is easy to infer, *at least generally, what the nature and spirit of the later, freer, larger training, of which we treat ought to be.*

It must not be one-sided, special, or narrow, but *many-sided, universal, and broad*. It must be broad with the breadth of human nature, and large with the largeness of the ministerial mission. It must address itself to mind, heart, and soul, and seek to develop the powers and provide fitting exercise to the highest energies and noblest faculties of each. And yet, at the same time, it must ever seek to accomplish this in wise proportion, observing and maintaining the rightful relation between the various elements, and working in due subordination to the religious interests and divine ends of the Christian ministry. With all its multiplicity and complexity, therefore, it will not be a mere aggregate of co-ordinate or detached efforts, but an organic whole, with a corporate life, a harmonious gradation of parts, and a clear definite plan. The details of that scheme will vary with the outward circumstances, the individual idiosyncrasies, and the special ambitions of each; but the diversity of detail will only emphasise and illustrate the unity of spirit and purpose.

Another feature common to every variety will be its *multiplicity of sources* and its *catholicity of spirit*. Just as its objects are manifold, and its sphere of action commensurate with our entire nature, so heaven and earth, the olden times and modern days, the written or printed records of books and the unwritten experience of life, the revelations of God and the gropings and conjectures of man, the pictured pages of Nature and the faint utterances of the inner guide, must all be laid under contribution and pressed into the service. Wherever a ray shines, it will be admitted to increase the sum of light. Wherever a wise, earnest voice speaks, dispelling doubt and increasing knowledge and hope, there will be silent, eager attention. Wherever a stream of pure and holy influence flows, there will be tarrying by the brink and drinking of the waters. Wherever there is a teacher sent from God, there will be a reverent sitting at his feet and a drinking in of his words. And yet here again there will be the necessary distinction made, the due balance maintained. We must forego some things, though it be with a pang, for the sake of still more indispensable gains. Human weakness, and fear of a shallow superficiality that is fatal to all power, must set very definite limits to our efforts and attainments. We must pick and choose—hold fast and reject. For, though all truth is precious, yet all truth is not *equally* precious and *equally* attainable; and the wise man will carefully discriminate. He will value and divide his energies between the various departments of truth, with careful regard both to their intrinsic importance, their practicability, and their place in the scheme of his life's great work.

Again, the whole *spirit and aim of this self-discipline must be practical*,—not in the lower utilitarian sense of yielding immediate returns in the base coinage of popularity, dexterity, or worldly success, but in the higher sense of contributing to the great objects of our divine calling—to the formation of a nobler, stronger, and more richly complex character—to the building up and ripening of a wide-minded, large-hearted, eager-souled personality—to the increase of the vital energy, and the perfecting of the instruments through which we accomplish our mission. That condition will exert its pressure on the whole fabric of this training. It will lead to the rejection, or at least to the setting in the background, of certain elements which might otherwise claim and acquire an undue prominence; to the right appreciation and cultivation of elements which were in danger of being overlooked and undervalued; to the exercise of a large, hopeful, wise patience, which remembers how gradually great results are ever brought about, which is content to lay the foundations

broad and to build slowly, which does not seek to anticipate the lingering results of time, and blast the autumn hopes by snatching at untimely fruit. It will teach the servant of Christ to prefer the permanent to the ephemeral—the vital growth to the mechanical production—the unmarked and noiseless but priceless results in character and life, to the loud showy successes of a superficial excitement.

And *last* of all, and *above* all, there will be a *unity of aim and directness of purpose, a firmness and supple strength of texture*, in the whole discipline. It may have to change its methods, to vary its instruments, and to alter its material. That endless variety and ceaseless change are at once the law of life and the source of inexhaustible interest. The minister will prove his intelligence and find his happiness in accommodating his modes of working to his own shifting conditions. But the great ends will ever remain the same; the ruling spirit will never change. By different routes, and employing widely different means, it passes on without haste or rest towards its object—pliant and flexible in its forms, but resolute and unchangeable in its inner nature. The same glad, solemn sense of lofty privilege, of dread responsibility, of noble vocation, will never cease to preside over and animate all the work. It will bind together all the separate and conflicting elements into something like a consistent whole, with not merely a cohesion and harmony of parts, but with a corporate life and a common soul. It will brace and nerve us, rearing within us an inner city of refuge from the weakening, dissipating action of those numberless distractions and activities which break up and fritter away the vital energies. It will lift us up above the lowering, vulgarising influences of the thousand petty cares and mechanical duties which eat the heart out of many a noble life, and make us strong with the strength of him who thoroughly knows his object, clearly sees his mark, and who moves on slowly and patiently, but hopefully and steadfastly, towards the predetermined end.—Rev. J. S. WILSON, M.A., *Lecturer in Pastoral Theology to the Church of Scotland.*



Selected Acorns from a Stalwart Oak.

Rev. JAMES BALDWIN BROWN, B.A.

“The smallest living *acorn* is fit to be the parent of *oak-trees* without end.”
—*Carlyle*.

THE WORLD IN THE SHADE.—“There is a sad tone about the world’s countenance. . . . The shadows lie more thickly than the sunbeams ; the winter reigns more mightily than the spring. . . . In the half-lights of man’s life here the shadow predominates and the minor rules the music of the world.”

COMMUNION WITH GOD.—“It is in the communion between Moses and the Divine Leader of the host that we are admitted into *the true sanctuary* of a people’s strength. . . . So we will enter with Moses within the cloud that sweeps round Sinai, and consider our sources of strength and guidance for the pilgrimage of life.”

THE WORK OF CHRIST.—“It is the work of the child of God in this life to recover the possession of his faculty through the vital attraction of his Saviour ; when the recovery is complete, when the flood of life flows freely through every pulse and channel, earth becomes too dark a prison-house, it is *time to arise and go home*.”

THE TRUE KING.—“God, my Redeemer ! There is but one redemption possible for man—restoration to the rule of his rightful King. The redeemed man is the governed man ; the man who has refound the King who can evoke his loyal passions, and control and direct his manifold powers. This supreme, complete control of his being heaven will restore.”

SUDDEN VISIONS.—“‘I never saw that in nature,’ said a critic to Turner. ‘I dare say not,’ was the answer, ‘but don’t you wish you could though ?’ His open eye saw what you and I can but dimly trace in nature ; but you and I shall see it, ay, and things more infinitely grand and fair, if the spirit, quickened by Christ and purged by discipline, bears up its faculty to the heavenly world ”

HEAVEN.—“*Heaven is a state*, and not a place, we are assured by our present illuminati most surely : places do not constitute spirits, but spirits places.”

REST.—“But for man to rest is to live. To rest in God is to enter into life.”

A WORLD BEHIND THE VEIL.—“*A world behind the veil* is the instinctive belief of every human spirit : a world, with all the attributes of a world like this, in which the promises of this flawed and fractured creation shall be realised ; wherein no hope shall be frustrated, no cord of association broken which has been consecrated by holy communion here.”

THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE, BRISTOL.

T. BROUGHTON KNIGHT.

Reviews.

EDUCATION AND EDUCATORS. By DAVID KAY, F.R.G.S. London : Kegan Paul and Co.

The author's estimate of education we thoroughly endorse. "Education is, strictly and properly, the educing or drawing out of the various powers and faculties of man, each to the highest state of perfection of which it is capable, and at the same time in perfect harmony with all the rest. Man is perfect in proportion to the perfection of his different faculties, and to bring them to this state,—to impart to them all the perfection of which their nature is capable,—is the purpose of education. The perfection of a faculty consists in its being fitted to efficiently discharge the duties that naturally fall to it; and a man is perfect in proportion as he is fully equipped and prepared for the right performance of the various duties and obligations that devolve upon him in life. We can only educate or train a faculty by the exercise of that faculty, and whatever calls a faculty into exercise trains or educates it, and is, therefore, an educator." The volume consists of eight chapters, the subjects of which are : "The Several Meanings of Education—The Nature and Importance of Education—The Hereditary Effects of Education—Education and the State—Education and Religion—The Different Kinds of Educators—Parents—Teachers." We consider this a very valuable book. It treats of one of the most important of all subjects touching man's destiny and character. The author, both in his thinkings and in his style, proves his competency for the work he has undertaken ; and then the authors which he quotes, which are unusually numerous, are some of the greatest thinkers of the world.

THE REVELATION OF COMMON SENSE. By ANTIPODES. London : E. W. Allen.

Common sense is in this age and land, where the human mind is so sophisticated and conventionalised, the most *uncommon* thing amongst us. In the departments of theological enquiry, and in the regions of the popular and orthodox in religion, it is, indeed, a rare quality. This volume is Socratic in its style : it is the record of a dialogue carried on between a vicar, the representative of a popular religion, and one who represents himself as "common sense." Amongst the many things that common sense here declares against the popular religion, take the following :—"Everything connected with religion should strike the understanding as truth. Mystery there may be, and must be, in spiritual man and an unseen God, but there is no need for delusions and the maintenance of superstition. Before we

separate to-day let me descant for a moment on the manner in which the Bible is introduced to us in this land. Perhaps there never was a greater departure from the truth, or a more glaring piece of dissimulation than is to be found in the preface to the authorised version of the Bible: 'To the Most High and Mighty Prince James, by the Grace of God King of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith,' &c. The real truth is that, instead of being high and mighty by the grace of God, he was low and contemptible by his own innate baseness; notoriously cowardly, mean, and treacherous, and strongly suspected at one time of a design to throw himself and kingdom into the lap of the Pope. The preface goes on to say: 'Great and merciful were the *blessings*, most dread sovereign, which Almighty God, the Father of all mercies, bestowed upon the people of England when first He sent your Majesty's royal person to rule over us.' After more of this sort of flattery, it finishes by assuring his Majesty that God's heavenly hand has enriched him with many singular and extraordinary graces. All this is the price paid by the church for a king's authority to a particular version of the two Testaments, which condoned all his infamies, and irradiated the countenance of the Royal Judas."

EXEGETICAL STUDIES. By PATON J. GLOAG, D.D. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark.

The author of these studies has taken rank amongst many of the ablest Biblical expositors of the age. His object in this work is to bring the result of modern exegesis to bear upon the interpretation of some difficult passages of Scripture. The following are the subjects of his critical investigations: "Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost—Our Lord's Blessing to Peter—Salted with Fire—The Women at the Cross—The Groaning Creation—Saved as by Fire—Women Veiled because of the Angels—Baptism for the Dead—Paul's Thorn in the Flesh—Duality of Mediation and Unity of God—The Complement of Christ's Sufferings—Exaltation of the Poor and Humiliation of the Rich—The Indwelling Spirit Lusteth to Envy—The Spirits in Prison—Christian Perfection—The Threefold Testimony." Though we cannot go with the author in all his interpretations, his thoughts on every subject are enlightened and enlightening, very suggestive and truly catholic. Preachers will do well to possess themselves of this little volume.

WE TWO. By EDNA LYALL. In Three Vols. London: Hurst & Blackett.

Although, in order to understand the literature of the age, we have read nearly all the best novels that have been published, it is not often that we have such works sent for notice. When they come, however, we read

them. The work before us, consisting of three volumes, possessed in its subject and style sufficient interest to draw us right through to its conclusion. "We Two,"—here are father and daughter. The father a man of great natural ability, extensive reading, independent thought, splendid appearance, and unusual oratoric power, is an atheist; that is, one who does not theoretically believe in the God of the popular religion. He does not seem to deny the fact of a supreme existence as revealed in the universe. When we were in our youthhood, we once heard one of the grandest preachers we ever listened to, referring to this subject exclaim, "*In relation to the God of the Calvinist—the God of jealousy, wrath, partiality, arbitrary will—I am an atheist.*" Some of the greatest Christians in every age have felt this. The atheist in this book—the father—is the subject of horror, denunciation, and violent persecution by all the conventional saints, and at last by their violence he dies. A martyr to his ideas is a lovely girl, a maid of genius, high culture, and passionate loyalty for her father. At length she is won to a belief in Christ, in whose spirit and aim she becomes an enthusiast, albeit her love for her father continues to the end, and his love for her. We are certain that our readers will be charmed with this novel, and we shall be glad to meet the talented authoress in another such work as this.

BOOKS ON OUR TABLE FOR REVIEW.

MODERN THEORIES IN PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION.—By Principal Tulloch. THE DOCTRINE OF DIVINE LOVE.—Sartorius. THE CHRIST OF HISTORY.—Dr. J. Young. LIGHT OF LIFE.—F. J. Scott. A LAMP AND A LIGHT.—Francis Bourdillon. GEORGE BIRBECK.—J. G. Goddard. PAULINE DISCOURSES.—Dr. J. Cross. JOHN WYCLIFFE.—Jackson Wray. JOHN WICKCLIF.—W. L. Watkinson. LIFE OF CHRIST.—Bernhard Weiss. LIFE OF ST. PAUL.—Rev. J. Stalker. HEATHEN MYTHOLOGY.—Hugh Barclay. MODERN ROMANISM.—Dr. Osborn. REVELATION RECONSIDERED.—W. Ewing. YOUNG'S TWOFOLD CONCORDANCE. QUARTERLY REVIEW. PRIMITIVE METHODIST MAGAZINE for June and July. UNITED FREE CHURCHES MAGAZINE. HOME WORDS. DAY OF DAYS. CHRISTIAN MESSENGER. THE FIRESIDE. JUVENILE MAGAZINE. CHILD'S FRIEND. WELCOME WORDS. ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.—Dr. Lindsay. TERSE TALK ON TIMELY TOPICS.—Henry Varley. EPISTLES OF JOHN.—H. Plummer. ENGLISH MEN OF LETTERS.—J. Morley. CHURCHLESS AND POOR IN OUR LARGE TOWNS.—R. Milne. SERMONS.—Theophilus Smith. SHORT HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN MISSIONS.—George Smith, LL.D. INDIRECT EVIDENCES OF THE PERSONAL DIVINITY OF CHRIST.—Dr. Young. LEGENDS OF THE BUDDHISTS.—R. L. Hardy. VALLEY OF SOREK.



The
Leading Homily.

PHARISAIC FALLACIES.

"WHEREFORE BY THEIR FRUITS YE SHALL KNOW THEM. NOT EVERY ONE THAT SAITH UNTO ME, LORD, LORD, SHALL ENTER INTO THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN; BUT HE THAT DOETH THE WILL OF MY FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN. MANY WILL SAY TO ME IN THAT DAY, LORD, LORD, HAVE WE NOT PROPHESED IN THY NAME? AND IN THY NAME HAVE CAST OUT DEVILS? AND IN THY NAME DONE MANY WONDERFUL WORKS? AND THEN WILL I PROFESS UNTO THEM, I NEVER KNEW YOU: DEPART FROM ME, YE THAT WORK INIQUITY."—*Matthew vii. 20-23.*

I HAVE to speak to you to-day on a subject to me unspeakably sad.* Willingly would I have kept silence; but things which have been said during the past week by many God-fearing people in this parish seem to leave me no choice. At the risk of being misunderstood, I must try, by the help of God, to tell you the thoughts that I believe God would suggest to us by that sudden death from fever which has caused alarm and grief amongst us. It is not the sudden or unprepared death of a healthy, romping youth that has grieved me most, sad though that be. The talk of pious people about that death has

* A Sermon on the sudden death of a boy from fever.

been infinitely more lamentable to me and, I believe, to the very heart of God also. It is not the subtle, contagious scarlet fever, the pestilence that walketh in darkness, that may lay you or me low next, it is not this that has alarmed me most. Hateful and alarming as this is, it is not so pregnant with moral and physical danger as what people say about the fever and about the death it has caused.

And first, in passing, a word as to the way in which many people talk about the fever. *They think of it as if it were something with which God smites people, as it were out of the sky or earth, in a manner that no one can account for.* As long as we think of fever in this way it will always spread more or less. Death from fever no more comes straight from God in an unaccountable way than does death from a gunshot or poison cup. If you knew all, you could tell where the fever that killed that lad came from as surely as you could tell who killed some shot sparrow that you pick up in the road, if you knew all. Just as you do not know from what tree a dead leaf which whirls about in the wind has come, but you are sure that it has come from some tree; so, too, may you be sure that the fever has come from some cause that you might lay your finger on, if you knew all. Every fever has sprung from some seed, as surely as every weed in your garden has sprung from seed, as surely as every smell, be it sweet or foul, might be traced to some one spot. You would not think it pious to say that God sent the weeds into your garden, or the bad smell in at your windows. Neither is it pious to say that He sent the fever that killed that boy. The fever came through the sin, the carelessness, the neglect, the uncleanness of someone; not from his own sin, but from that of somebody else; someone, perhaps, as far away from him as the person who wore the rag out of which this paper is made may be far away from me. You remember how our Lord Jesus Christ fought against disease and premature death; shewing thus that they were contrary to the Will of God and the Divine Order of the Universe. God overrules our calamities for our good. He does not manufacture them. Our sin, negligence, and ignorance, or those of others, make the evil in the world.

But it is of something that seems to me much more dangerous, and more unwarrantable, if possible, than this careless habit of thinking of fever and diseases as if created by God, that I chiefly feel bound to speak to you to-day. *People can bring themselves not only to think but to dare to speak of individuals after their death as for ever lost, as gone to a hell from which there is no return.* I know what I am saying to be true. Never before have I been so much shocked and grieved by anything that I have heard religious people say. I have often been grieved and shocked by the confidence with which some preachers and writers assert that there is no hope for those who die impenitent. But never till I came here have I known anyone declare that some particular person was one of the lost. For assertions of this kind I thought it was necessary to go back to the middle ages, when Popes and ecclesiastics used recklessly to denounce their dead enemies as lost in endless torments. I repeat that I am not exaggerating. It is not apprehension that these good people express; it is not merely trepidation; it is anathema, as confident, as unhesitating as ever Pope or Council breathed. I find, indeed, that, whenever anyone is dying in the parish, good people think themselves able to judge as to whether the person is fit or unfit to die. After coming away from a death-bed I have often been asked as to the condition of the person's soul, as if I or any Christian bystander must know infallibly whether the person is going to heaven or hell. I had thought till I came to this part of the world that such infallible judgments were only supposed to be passed by Papist priests, and that public opinion did an injustice to their view on this subject. But I now find that all sorts of people in this neighbourhood of Romney Marsh consider themselves perfectly qualified to form and promulgate judgments as to the everlasting doom of their neighbours, with a confidence which would be forbidden to priests acting on the most sacerdotal principles. My brethren, I believe that the utterance of such judgments as these, nay, more, the allowing them even to rest in the mind, is hateful to God and full of harm to the cause of religion amongst men.

How Christians, who believe that the Lord Jesus Christ of the

Gospels is our God and Judge, can think themselves capable of passing these sweeping judgments on their fellow-men, I cannot understand. But, you reply, did He not say, "By their fruits ye shall know them?" Yes, and what are the very next words to these (St. Matt. vii. 20-23), "Not everyone that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father. Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity."

Not by what they said or thought about themselves, not by the extent to which they prophesied, or spoke out (for such is part of the meaning of this word), and did great things in Christ's name, not by these, but "by their fruits ye shall know them." Surely then, I am told, we can judge the Sabbath-breaker, the swearer. I say to everyone who speaks thus—Go and turn over a few leaves of any of the four Gospels; see where our Lord spoke the words of severest condemnation, see what the fruits are which are most dear to Him. Our Lord was not much given to making lists of virtues and vices, the good and evil fruits. He came to impart the spirit of love and all virtue, to give us life rather than a long list. But take any of the lists of good fruits which He or His apostles occasionally made, and, with that before you, say, if you dare, that *you* have produced *all* its fruits, or that the worst person you know has produced *none*. Take the list in the sermon on the mount (St. Matt. v.); or the account of the things done by the sheep in the parable of the judgment, and left undone by the goats (St. Matt. xxv.); or St. Paul's list of the fruit of the spirit and works of the flesh (Galatians v.). Anyone familiar with these will know the impossibility of placing himself within the boundary and others outside the boundary of those who have produced such good fruits as love, joy, meekness, peacemaking, *hungering* after righteousness, long suffering, kindness to strangers and prisoners and hungry and thirsty folk; or such evil fruits as wrath, strife, uncleanness, envyings.

But those who pass these judgments do not really rely upon the evidence of good fruits in themselves or others, although they find such repeated assertions throughout the Bible that the life of man is what God chiefly cares for. They rely upon such texts as "There is no condemnation for them which are in Christ Jesus"; "He that believeth not is condemned"; "A man is justified by faith."

But you have no right or authority to judge of a man's faith by anything except by the fruit it produces. You can, perhaps, tell who does and who does not believe this or that doctrine. But to judge who is the true believer in God and in Jesus Christ and in the Holy Spirit is impossible, except in so far as we see the believer bringing forth fruits which we know can spring only from faith in the Most High. And as none of us can see the whole life of any man, woman, or child, it is not given to us to assert of any life whatsoever that it has manifested none of those fruits of faith to which I have just called your attention.

Thus, when you stand by the death-bed or the open grave, and think yourselves qualified to declare the eternal condition of a departing soul, you are making yourselves judges of that of which only the omniscient God can judge.

And it should always be remembered by those who think of any of their brothers and sisters as for ever lost, that our Lord reprobated most severely *not* the Sabbath-breakers, the swearers, the outcasts, "the lowest" of the people, but the Pharisees. We are not told of the Pharisees that their lives were grossly wicked. Some people think of these Pharisees as having been secretly evil-livers. There is no reason to suppose this. They were self-satisfied, thinking themselves better than their brethren, the publicans and sinners; hypocrites of the worst sort, deceiving *themselves*. It was of these outwardly respectable religious people that our Lord said, "The publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you."

But you say, "Are we to see vice and evil around us, and to profess to be unable to condemn the sinner? Cannot we see for ourselves when people are sinning against God and man, and are we not bound to protest and condemn?" Yes: undoubtedly we

can judge of particular sins, and we are bound to condemn those sins. Only let conscience begin its work at home and utter its protest first against sins about which no one has a moment's doubt, and it will keep sorrowful, ashamed silence when it comes to contemplate the whole of any one soul at the hour of death.

What I am protesting against, I hope you see, brethren, is this habit of some people of settling that their own condition is so far satisfactory before God that they are sure at death to go to heaven for ever, and at the same time that the condition of a neighbour is so far unsatisfactory that he or she is sure to have gone to hell for ever. You know I am not exaggerating when I say that this is the accepted style of language in this neighbourhood. Those who would not venture, and thank God I believe there are many such, to take this language on to their own lips do yet accept it from others as godly and unquestionable.

Pray mark that I am *not* saying that we are to turn away from the deathbed or the grave of the impenitent and hold our tongues as to the certain punishment awaiting sin, and if occasion call for it, even the sinner who has just departed. What I do say, and what our Church Burial Service compels me to say is this—that you have no right to declare of anyone that his state is hopeless. I said over that lad's body, "Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God of His great mercy to take unto Himself the soul of our dear brother here departed, we therefore commit his body to the ground . . . in sure and certain hope of the Resurrection to eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body that it may be like unto His glorious body, according to the mighty working, whereby he is able to subdue all things to Himself." The body that we buried, will, in a few years, have returned to its dust and be blown about we know not where. But Christ will some day give him a new and spiritual body according "to the mighty working whereby He is able to subdue all things to Himself." How dare you limit the power of that mighty working? Shall not He who is to give a new body in His mighty working also give a new heart, subduing the old Adam of which we have impiously despaired?

I have before this given you my reasons for believing that all

God's punishments in the next world, as well as in this, are reformatory, and not vindictive; that every pain He sends in punishment is meant to subdue the evil in the man, to subdue the whole man to Himself, to goodness.

Those who die unbelieving, impenitent, unloving, must suffer in the world beyond the grave. I cannot conceive of them as not suffering, if they live on and are the same individuals. They have lost for ever the opportunities that God gave them here; they are incapable at present of enjoying a heaven of love; *they* are *lost*. But God is still their father. I must have another revelation than that of which my Bible tells me before I can believe that the Father of Jesus ever ceases to be the Father of all men. He will punish; He must punish; He cannot cease to be what He is eternally and essentially, The Father. Will He then punish a moment longer than is necessary? In many cases we know how long punishment lasts before the sinner can reform. Lifelong penal servitude, here, often fails to reform the criminal of his most glaring vices. What long ages, then, may be needful to subdue and root out the subtle vices of which a man when he leaves this world has never even dreamt himself to be guilty. When one begins to picture the subject to one's self, one is lost in the mazes of difficulty that beset the salvation of any single sinner. One can simply bow in thankful adoration before the Gospel of the atoning power of the Saviour who is able to win and subdue all things to Himself, and to His Father and ours—of whom we teach every child to say, "He has redeemed me and all mankind." I am not surprised, you will not be surprised, if you realise any of the sinfulness of sin, at the many words of our Lord which describe the condition of lost sinners. But it seems most reverent and reasonable to take His words not as threats of punishment, which will be inflicted for ever without doing any good to anyone, but as describing the self-reproducing consequences of sin and the horrors of sin in the sight of the All-Seeing and All-Holy. Our poor sinful eyes look chiefly at the punishment that sin must bring. The All-Holy One must think chiefly of the sin and its horrors in itself. You tell me He never said in so many words that when the everlasting fire, the

consuming fire of His Love and Wrath, has burnt out the evil from any sinner, it will have done its work, and the man will be as pure gold from the furnace, needing it no longer, suffering from it no longer. How could He say so without seeming to imply to the wicked that at any moment, however late, it would be soon enough to repent? He, as the All-Holy, must have had chiefly in His mind the horror of sin, and not the amount or length of punishment. Whilst we are looking forward to the punishment, He is grieving over the horrors of the sin itself. This is surely enough to explain to us why we do not find such qualifications as you would otherwise have expected. It was sufficient that anyone who despaired of a lost sinner should know what Jesus Himself claimed to be, "the Everlasting God," "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever," to whom all power in heaven and earth is committed; who has the keys of hell and of death. What mother who believes His claim could despair for ever of the wickedest child? It is on the whole character and Godhead of Christ that we mainly rest our denial of the common interpretation of some of His utterances.

Once, 330 years ago, the Church of England had an article condemning those who hold out the hopes which I have felt it my duty to-day to lay before you. But that article was after a few years expunged from the Prayer Book. The Prayer Book nowhere orders me to teach that future punishment is hopeless and endless. An increasing number of clergy and ministers of religion are feeling themselves bound to look forward to and to point to "The times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began." (Acts ii. 21.) The Wesleyan body, which compels its members to profess the doctrine of endless punishment, loses many of its ablest ministers, who have come to feel that they cannot teach or believe it. And so would our Church if she held it. I can claim, therefore, from those who do not share these larger hopes, a humble toleration and a prayerful consideration of them.

For my part I shall love to think of that youth as a martyr. If his death arrests sufficient attention for more reasonable views

than at present prevail of the causes of fevers, it will be the means of new and healthier life for others. There will be less of what a prominent man of science has termed "slaughter of the innocents." And if his death, sudden, untimely, unprepared, if you will judge, force us to attach more importance to the great virtue of Hope, if it make us feel more of the hatefulness of SIN IN ITSELF, if it force us to realise more of the vastness of the Eternal Fatherhood of God, the Eternal Godhead and Salvation of Christ, the Eternal and Unsearchable Power and Influence of the Holy Spirit, if it lead us to value more highly the great truths and facts to which our Common Worship and our Sacraments bear witness, and think more humbly of the worth of our own poor feelings, then indeed that mother's loss will be rich gain to Christ and His Church.

G. SARSON, M.A.

RECTOR OF ORLESTONE.



FOLLOWING CHRIST THE LIGHT.—"Christ as the Light sweeps onward to new regions, and thither it is our charge to follow Him. As we look back we can see the course of His Church in a pathway of glory broadening through all the ages. And let us not doubt that the pathway will broaden still. Meanwhile our part is clear—to look to the Light steadily, to receive the Light heedfully, to spread the Light untiringly. The Light cannot mislead us and cannot fail us; it is *the Light of Life*." —CANON WESTCOTT.

Germs of Thought.

The Saviour Sent and Received.

“FOR GOD SENT NOT HIS SON INTO THE WORLD TO CONDEMN THE WORLD, BUT THAT THE WORLD THROUGH HIM MIGHT BE SAVED. HE THAT BELIEVETH ON HIM IS NOT CONDEMNED: BUT HE THAT BELIEVETH NOT IS CONDEMNED ALREADY, BECAUSE HE HATH NOT BELIEVED IN THE NAME OF THE ONLY BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD.”—*John* iii. 17, 18.

A SERIOUS and candid enquirer after truth, being drawn to Christ, probably, by the sight of His marvellous doings, is here the occasion of a discourse from the lips of the Great Teacher, in which some of the simplest, the choicest, and most vital truths of the Gospel are found. Here also, in this same chapter, we have something more than a Divine actinism, in beams that come to us from the awful, the eternal splendour, producing, with a singular immediateness, life, beauty, and song—in all who, though “dead in trespasses and sin,” accept in a reverent faith this wooing message of the Father.

I.—A MANIFESTATION OF GOD IN A PERSONAL AND HUMAN FORM WAS THE DEEP AND URGENT NEED OF MAN. The universe is vocal with the voice and radiant with the glories of a God—a first cause,—“for the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world,” &c. While *His works* in some measure make Him known, a clearer revelation yet is given of Him in *His word*, where His existence is simply stated without any attempt at proof. What child would be allowed to say repeatedly to his parent, prove to me that you are my father, and then I will obey you?

A revelation being given, the voice thus sustains the hand and supports the intuitional. Perhaps the fact may be traced to this revelation by its rays, direct or aslant; but it seems to us very

clear that *all nations*, with barely an exception, and all men, except the apostles of the senses,—the Agnostic or the Atheist,—have believed in the existence of some great ruling mind. Professor R. Flint says, after looking at all Sir J. Lubbock said to the contrary, “I do not venture to maintain that there are no tribes, no people wholly without any sense of dependence on invisible powers. I only say that, so far as I can judge, it has not been made out that there is any such tribe of people.”

Well, now, is it not quite natural that men should have a passionate craving to *see* this Supreme Power?

In thinking that God would show Himself, men judged that the sun, fire, beasts, or the elements might hold, or represent Him; or even lower still,—dumb idols, grotesque and ugly. Materialism and Polytheism are recognised in Heathenism, just because, without a revelation from God, the Divine unity and spirituality are utterly unknown. In giving a *shape* to the false gods, while man has always blundered as to *the form*, still he has always been aiming at one and the same Power behind the veil of the material.

If God is, in His essence, a spirit, not having parts, shape, or substance, it follows that if He would in any way condescend to be *seen* by man, some material form must be employed. Having an independent existence, and being the great Proprietor of all existence, He could use any form His pleasure might take. In the world's youth He made Himself known by the form of an *angel*, as to Abram, Jacob, and Joshua. So also then by Abraham's lamp of fire at his sacrifice (Gen. xv.). Then, again, in the peninsula of Sinai, with the burning bush of Moses, He shows Himself in a sparklet of His glory. So at “the awful mount,” with smoke, fire, and voice. Furthermore, we have that marvellous companion cloud, the moving banner of the august Presence and Guide. And, again, the trembling Shekinah, in the sacred tent and Temple.

Now such ways as these, by which the Almighty made Himself known to men in older times, were fitted (as all super-human appearances are) to produce awe,—yes, and even to *repel* rather than attract.

If the race, having gone astray in rash rebellion, should ever be made familiar with the Holy Father, it must first be brought into a state of reverent submission, and so show the docility of a moral preparedness. Under such a light we can understand more clearly the apparent severity of that primitive dispensation, the early dawn, an age of elementary truths and of a "lesser glory." The lower forms in a school are always seasoned with more *physical* severity, the persuasion of the rod, &c.

We submit, then, that a manifestation of God in a *human form* would be expedient, because (1) *it could be the more easily approached*. We should "not be consumed by the heat of the Divine presence, nor dazzled by its brightness." (2) *It would be better understood*. All men understand an embodied truth, both more easily and sooner, than an abstract one. Print can be read more easily than type, and pictures often convey a meaning more readily than any school manual. "The glory of God is nowhere else so seen as "in the face of Jesus Christ." (3) Such an appearance would also be *one of great attractive grace*. A portrait of the Queen may be very exact, still, though even a Millais has lent his skill to it, *her person* is more attractive than such a production. (4) Again, it would be the most fit to show a *genuine sympathy with human nature*; as when a monarch may visit the hospitals, and the homes of the poor. And the *probable success* of such a manifestation would arise from the same source, for "a doctrine only is a mere abstraction. A Divine person we need, and such we have."—*Hugh Miller*.

II.—ALTHOUGH THIS MANIFESTATION WAS THE GREAT NEED, YET, IF GRANTED, IT MIGHT BE EXPECTED TO BE ONE FOR CONDEMNATION. Amongst the earliest truths which were taught men by Heaven were—First: there was a common taint of depravity and guilt, which the ancient ritual told so expressively; "by one man sin entered," &c. Secondly: becoming thus a moral outlaw, came the exposure to "wrath to come;" the afterings,—the Amen to guilt.

With such heavy truths pressing hard on a man's soul, how durst he do other than expect that if God should deign to come in the form of a man it would be to condemn or punish. What

did Gideon's fear say? Judges vi. 22. Such a visit for condemnation would seem just, for (1) sin is ever a matter of man's personal election. (2) It is a direct violation of the express will of God. (3) It is opposed to the primitive instincts of man's nature. (4) And through his example and influence brings the dread risk of woe to others.

III.—THIS MANIFESTATION, ALTHOUGH GRANTED, HAS YET BEEN MADE FOR A WIDELY DIFFERENT PURPOSE—"to save." Although the Manifester was a *separate* person (the *Son* of God) He was yet *an equal one*. Less than God would never have satisfied the hunger of earth, for then there would have still been an unmet want. If an interview is sought with a monarch on some vital question, who is so content to see an aide-de-camp? "Very God of very God," "the express image," &c. "A God in the flesh was no new idea to the Jew, from the promises and narratives in Genesis, the fourth Figure in the furnace, the strains of prophecy and the oral traditions of the Jews. Nor was it new to the Gentiles, for in the old mythology of Greece there was a humanizing of its Gods."—*W. E. Gladstone*. "Jesus is to Paul (says Canon Liddon) not a deceased teacher, nor a philanthropist who has simply done his great work and then left it as a legacy to the world. He is God ever-living and ever-present." While "the incarnation bridges over the abyss which opens in our thought between earth and heaven," and we see Him folding our poor humanity round His eternal person, we not less see Him most distinctly showing the marks of a perfect equality with Jehovah. The Son of God What mean these *titles* given to Him—as "the mighty God," "the Alpha and Omega"? What the solemn assertions of His God-head made by Himself? "Before Abraham was, I am." What voice do His various miraculous works utter? What means *the worship* paid to Him? Acts vii. 59; Hebrews i. 6.

Then suppose you are asked *the character* of His manifestation; it was *predicted*,—the whole burden of prophecy. "From behind the prophetic veil there glows the image of a man, a stranger to everybody, but friendly to all" (*Ecce Deus*) and to that no other name than Christ's responds; thus, "to Him give all the prophets

witness." Any man claiming to be Christ must show himself as perfectly squaring with the prophetic outline.

As to the *mysteriousness* of the event, when omnipotence itself gave an emphasis to charity it surely dwarfs the dimensions of every other known transaction. Not less was it a manifestation of the most magnificent *mercy* than of the superbest *holiness*.

The *design*, however, of all this was "not to condemn," but "that the world through Him might *be saved*." Salvation was a consecrated word in the language of Israel. We are not hampered by any ethnological, geographical, political, or social limitations. "The world He suffered to redeem, for all He hath the atonement made." So He saves men on the broadest possible area consistent with human freedom. One sun is enough to light the world, and one Saviour "able to save to the uttermost *all* that come unto God by Him."

IV.—A HEARTY FAITH IN THIS MANIFESTATION IS THE ONE EXCLUSIVE MEANS FOR THE WORLD'S SALVATION. (Verse 18.) It is not hard to see that the grace of the provision carries the right to make its own terms for possession.

Had God demanded that our present life should be a continuous torture—one long endurance of pain, to gain "the life hereafter," we might have given thanks; but the terms are easy, simple, and free, and within the range of the meanest ability. If by faith ruin was invited, faith in a lie; so now, that ruin may be averted by faith in the truth. Alas, the non-reception of this redeeming truth leaves man in a state of condemnation—"condemned already." Better the state—who being saved "already," have a hope for evermore.

SCARBOROUGH.

EDWIN D. GREEN.



ETERNAL LIFE.—"It becomes evident that as we ascend in the scale of life we rise also in the scale of longevity. The lowest organisms are, as a rule, short-lived, and the rate of mortality diminishes more or less regularly as we ascend in the animal scale. . . . The more an organism, in virtue of its complexity, can adapt itself to all the parts of its environment, the longer it will live."—HENRY DRUMMOND, F.R.S.E., F.G.S.

The Conversion of Saul.

“AND I PERSECUTED THIS WAY UNTO THE DEATH, BINDING AND DELIVERING INTO PRISONS BOTH MEN AND WOMEN. AS ALSO THE HIGH PRIEST DOTH BEAR ME WITNESS, AND ALL THE ESTATE OF THE ELDERS: FROM WHOM ALSO I RECEIVED LETTERS UNTO THE BRETHREN, AND WENT TO DAMASCUS, TO BRING THEM WHICH WERE THERE BOUND UNTO JERUSALEM, FOR TO BE PUNISHED. AND IT CAME TO PASS, THAT, AS I MADE MY JOURNEY, AND WAS COME NIGH UNTO DAMASCUS ABOUT NOON, SUDDENLY THERE SHONE FROM HEAVEN A GREAT LIGHT ROUND ABOUT ME, AND I FELL UNTO THE GROUND, AND HEARD A VOICE SAYING UNTO ME, SAUL, SAUL, WHY PERSECUTEST THOU ME? AND I ANSWERED, WHO ART THOU, LORD? AND HE SAID UNTO ME, I AM JESUS OF NAZARETH, WHOM THOU PERSECUTEST. AND THEY THAT WERE WITH ME SAW INDEED THE LIGHT, AND WERE AFRAID; BUT THEY HEARD NOT THE VOICE OF HIM THAT SPAKE TO ME. AND I SAID, WHAT SHALL I DO, LORD? AND THE LORD SAID UNTO ME, ARISE, AND GO INTO DAMASCUS; AND THERE IT SHALL BE TOLD THEE OF ALL THINGS WHICH ARE APPOINTED FOR THEE TO DO.”—*Acts* xxii. 4-10.

THE conversion of Saul of Tarsus is a very important point in the history of the Christian Church. The improbability that such a thing should ever have happened made it startling and wonderful. Here was a man whose hatred of the despised sect was intense. The sect was pretty generally hated, indeed, but Saul of Tarsus stood pre-eminent as a hater. He was a man who could never be other than pre-eminent. There was such force of character—such an iron will in him—that he could not but take the lead of his fellows wherever he might be. Whether as a bitter persecutor, or an earnest upholder of the Christian faith, he must be foremost; his giant strength must tower above all the rest.

He was a born leader; and as men of that kind are not very numerous, his conversion was a matter of no small account to the Church. Whenever a great change takes place in the mental or moral attitude of a great man society feels a shock, for great

men have great influence. Probably many people change with him.

The great change that came over this great man, Saul of Tarsus, may suggest three points for consideration. 1. His misdirected energy. 2. God's method of converting this misdirected energy. 3. The energetic soul's enquiry after conversion.

I.—SAUL'S MISDIRECTED ENERGY.

In the account of Saul's conversion given in the ninth chapter of the Acts, we read that he was "breathing threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord." What a strong description of this strong man! What an insight those few words give us to his character! He was not opposed to the Christian brotherhood in a quiet, inactive sort of way, as so many of that time were; but he was "breathing threatening and slaughter." The immense energy of the man is apparent to us at once.

(a) Energy is a splendid trait in any man's character. It is great, and we love what is great. It is a grand thing to look upon the mighty sea, when the waves rise mountains high, and the great ocean breast is stirred with the wild commotion of the storm. There seems to be such divine energy in it, and our hearts are filled with wonder and with awe as we gaze upon it. It makes us think of God. And it is a grand thing to see in a fellow-man something of this *great force of doing*; a great soul full of active energy. We watch such a man battling his way through the host of opposing forces, overcoming every obstacle, trampling down every difficulty, until he reaches the point towards which he was striving. "There is energy," we say; and we admire it from our hearts. We can never admire a man who altogether lacks this force of character; who is idle and listless; who never seems to have a definite object in view; who is never struggling for anything. Such a man never seems to know what to do with himself, and is constantly in the way of those who do. But we cannot help honouring the energetic, striving man. We love him for his non-successes even. It is better that he should try and fail than never try at all. It is the trying—the courage and the *pluck*—not the object gained, that call forth admiration.

(b) A distinction must be drawn between *loveable energy* and *unloveable noise and show*. The latter is sometimes mistaken for the former, and the mistake is a great one. Intense energy is often intensely quiet. See the immense but quiet energy of Saul. He *breathes* his hatred to the Christian sect; it is the spirit of his life; he does not spend his time in shouting invectives. His energy is splendid, but how horribly it is misdirected!

(c) And so, although it is a splendid thing to have energy of character, it is withal *a very dangerous thing*. An energetic man will either be very good or very bad; a grand saint or a gigantic sinner; a Saul of Tarsus, "breathing threatening and slaughter" against God's cause, or a Saint Paul, willing to do or bear anything for Christ's dear sake.

(d) See the unutterable importance for energetic souls of wise and holy guidance during their early years.

(e) Think, too, how sad must be the closing days of a man of strong character who has never yielded himself to God.

II.—GOD'S METHOD OF CONVERTING SAUL'S MISDIRECTED ENERGY.

He was converted by

(a) *A vision of Jesus*. (1 Cor. xv. 8.)

(b) *Hearing the voice of Jesus*.

Christ appealed to him—"Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?"

Observe how Christ *identifies Himself with His suffering disciples* in this appeal, and *the pathetic tenderness* of it.

There are glimpses of Jesus to be gained to-day, and amidst all the rush and clamour of this noisy age. His voice may be heard, if we will but hearken. "To day if ye shall hear His voice harden not your hearts." (Hebrews iii. 15.)

III.—THE ENERGETIC SOUL'S ENQUIRY AFTER HIS CONVERSION.
"What shall I do, Lord?"

Christ was his Master now. This humble question is proof of the reality of his conversion. True conversion is the submission of heart and will to Christ.

MORETON-IN-MARSH.

J. KIRK PIKE.

Now and Then.

“NOW WE SEE THROUGH A GLASS DARKLY, BUT THEN FACE TO FACE.”—1 Cor. xiii. 12.

PAUL had just been speaking of the “*child* and the *man*,” and that but inadequately represents the difference between the “now” in this world and the “then” in the world to come.

I.—Our ORGANS of vision “NOW” implied in the words—“we see.” *Our mental and spiritual powers of apprehension and knowledge.* Through these we get all we know of God and His doings, past, present, and future. They are defective and weak by reason of (1) sin, (2) the want of proper culture.

II.—Our MEDIUM of seeing “NOW through a glass darkly.” Allusion is here made to those burnished metallic reflectors, used by orientals as mirrors are by us. The truth taught is that God is seen only by reflection; that that which reflects is incapable of presenting a full likeness:—(1) Because of our own defective vision. (2) The defective reflector. (3) The magnitude of what is to be revealed. The glass through which we see is (1) Nature. (2) Revelation. (3) Providence. These three represent God in His works, His words, and His government. But that there is mystery and darkness about them, who is vain enough to deny? That God is to be seen in nature, revelation, and providence, all are ready to admit, but when with our weak vision we attempt to peer into these glasses, *how darkly we see.*

III.—Our ORGANS of vision “THEN.” The same as “now,” but how greatly multiplied and developed no mortal may know. The knowledge of God’s character, government, and glory, which may be the heritage of all who enter Heaven, may surpass the powers of the strongest imagination to conceive. Death, to the Christian, is only the raising of the windows, the throwing back of the shutters, and the unfolding of many a scene of knowledge unknown to mortals here.

IV.—Our MEDIUM of seeing “THEN,” “face to face.” No glass

any more. Blessed contact,—actual presence. “Then” (1) the enormity of sin, (2) the redemption of Christ, (3) the glory of the redeemed, (4) the righteousness of God’s government will be felt and seen as never before. The child becomes a *man*, and for the first time puts away *all* “childish things.” The light of eternity will, no doubt, stamp many things as childish which were reverently practised and tenaciously defended in this world. Thank God, however, we can know enough “now” to make us gloriously safe and triumphant “then.” Though “now we see only through a glass darkly,” we can see enough of God to assure us “that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.” *Now* and *then* are closely and vitally related. Our “then” will drape itself in gloom or glory because of its relation to our “now.” Right use of “now,” will make us triumphantly glorious “*then*.”

PHILADELPHIA.

THOMAS KELLY.

Paul looking towards Rome.

“AND I AM SURE THAT, WHEN I COME UNTO YOU, I SHALL COME IN THE FULNESS OF THE BLESSING OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST.”—*Romans* xv. 29.

“I MUST also see Rome” (Acts xix. 21). Such the making known of a long cherished purpose. Thoughts of Paul, though a man of high culture, not on works of literature and art; groups of statuary—the Forum, or Coliseum, or Temple of “Capitolian Jove”; but on the despised Hebrew community of the Trans-Tiberine district of the imperial city.

I.—UNFALTERING CONFIDENCE THAT GOD’S BLESSING WOULD GO WITH HIM. Examine the grounds of this confidence, for if it rest on no sufficient ground it is presumption and not confidence.

(a) *The promise of the departing Saviour.* “Go ye into all . . . and, lo, I am with you always.” How the servants of

Jesus, then and since, scattered through divers lands, struggling with adverse circumstances, unfavourable influences, numerous and powerful adversaries, and *alone*, must often with delight have recalled to mind this parting assurance of their Lord! Darkness unrelieved by a single ray,—but in the densest gloom a voice, sweet beyond compare, says, “Fear not, for I am with thee.” Persecution has kindled her fires, but in the furnace itself there has been with them “One like unto the Son of God.” Often had the apostle Paul realized the blessed fulfilment of Christ’s promise in the persecutions and sufferings which he had been called to endure—as at Lystra, Iconium, Philippi.

(b) *Tokens for good in successful labours elsewhere.* Damascus and Jerusalem, Tarsus and Antioch, Cyprus and Thessalonica, Philippi and Athens, Ephesus and Corinth had witnessed the triumphs of the Gospel as ministered by him. He could, with deepest gratitude, testify that “from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum,” he had “fully preached the Gospel of Christ.” And he was still not ashamed of it, but believed it to be “the power of God unto salvation.”

(c) *Possibly intimated by the Holy Spirit Himself.* C.f., Acts xx. 23.—“The Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.” Acts xx. 25.—“I know that ye . . . shall see my face no more.” Acts xxi. 11, tells us that a certain prophet, Agabus, who was at Cæsarea, testified by the Holy Ghost that Paul should be delivered to the Gentiles.

II.—FIRM RELIANCE ON PRAYER HERE EXHIBITED. With how many is so-called belief in such subjects as a future or another world, prayer, &c., not *belief* at all, but only an idea, a notion, a picture? Practical scepticism on the subject of prayer is prevalent.

Do not let us pretend to believe in its efficacy, that nothing else can supply its place, that the prayerless soul is a Christless soul, if neither by voice nor presence we say “Amen” to the supplications of the Lord’s servants. If we believed all this, should we not “give ourselves unto prayer?”

Narrowly examine the text, and learn—

(a) *It is prayer inspired by the Holy Spirit's love.*

(b) *It is prayer directed towards definite objects.* Not a number of random utterances, or an unvarying round of petitions, but precise and definite.

1. Deliverance from the unbelieving and disobedient in Judea.

2. Acceptance by the saints at Jerusalem of his service for them.

3. Joyous coming of the apostle to Rome.

4. Mutual comfort and spiritual strengthening of both himself and them. "That I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, that we may be comforted together by the mutual faith both of you and me."

(c) *It is prayer described as "agonizing together," combating together side by side, helping one another.*

In one of the Churches of Paris there is, or was, a picture by an eminent artist, representing the Wrestling of Jacob and the Angel. The patriarch's foot is between the feet of the Angel. Earnest, determined purpose is expressed in every line of the painting!

Can not but dwell an instant on the proverbial saying, "Man proposes but God disposes;" or, as Solomon expressed it, "The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing is of the Lord;" or, in Shakesperean phrase, "There's a divinity that shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we will." Paul planned a journey to Spain, and purposed seeing Rome and its infant Christian community by the way, "I must see Rome," he had said. Paul did see Rome, but he went there as a prisoner. "I am ready to preach the Gospel to you that are at Rome also;" he did preach the Gospel there, but in chains. Thus God often grants our *main* desire; while that from which we pray to be delivered He uses as a *means* for accomplishing that desire. We pray to be weaned from earth, drawn nearer to God,—and loss, suffering, death are the means by which God weans and draws us.

Homiletical Commentary.

NOTES ON THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

“The Tempter.”

Chapter iv. 7-10.—“SUBMIT YOURSELVES THEREFORE TO GOD. RESIST THE DEVIL, AND HE WILL FLEE FROM YOU. DRAW NIGH TO GOD, AND HE WILL DRAW NIGH TO YOU. CLEANSE YOUR HANDS, YE SINNERS; AND PURIFY YOUR HEARTS, YE DOUBLE MINDED. BE AFFLICTED, AND MOURN, AND WEEP: LET YOUR LAUGHTER BE TURNED TO MOURNING, AND YOUR JOY TO HEAVINESS. HUMBLE YOURSELVES IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD, AND HE SHALL LIFT YOU UP.”

THESE exhortations rise out of what the apostle has just been saying. God, he has been telling his readers, resists, sets Himself against the proud, against those who, taking the side of the world, and becoming friends with it, thereby set themselves against Him. This is the position which God takes up, cannot help taking up the moment a nation or an individual forgets his creaturely dependence upon Him, and thinks to live apart from, or in antagonism to, Him. “Behold I am against thee,” saith the Lord, to every one such; God resisteth the proud, sets Himself as in battle array against every one such, singles him out and advances against him; if He must, to bring down his high looks; if He may, to soften his heart into meek subjection, to make him His willing servant in the day of His power. God resists the proud, but there is that which He more gladly does, which He has delight in doing, He gives grace to the humble, to the lowly, to those who do not think of themselves more highly than they ought to think. Then, He takes into His favour, upon them He bestows the riches of His fellowship, with them, He condescends to dwell. “The proud He knoweth afar off,” with him that is of a humble, contrite spirit, it is His

delight to dwell. Thus saith the High and Holy One, who inhabiteth eternity, I delight to dwell with him who trembleth at My word! "God resisteth the proud but He giveth grace to the humble."

But this being so, there is a very urgent need, a very immediate call for submission. The creature who "sets himself against," can never "stand against" God: shall the thing made strive with its maker? If a man will rush against the buckler of the

The urgent
call for
submission.

Almighty, it can only be to be broken in pieces: no weapon formed against Him can prosper; when He rises up against the evil-doers, who among them will stand? But there is no need that He should rise up against them, let them, as is surely most meet, submit themselves to Him, instead of setting themselves against Him, let them set themselves against His enemy and their own, let them draw near again to the gracious Master and Friend from whom they have been holding themselves aloof, let them humble themselves in the sight of the Lord, and they will experience His loving-kindness, the tenderness of His mercies who giveth grace to the humble. "Submit yourselves therefore to God." "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord and He will exalt you!"

All this, which is true of those whose whole life has been rebellion against God, is equally true and more heinously sinful in those who, having experienced His friendship, have slighted it, preferring the friendship of the world, of those who, members of His Church, have exalted themselves against their fellows, who have been selfish, and envious, and proud, seeking honour among men rather than the honour which cometh from the enjoyment of the favour of God. The life-long rebels have never experienced

The sinful-
ness of the
sins of Saints.

the gracious nearness of their King: if they had, perhaps they would never have risen against Him: at all events, they would not have had the guilt of crucifying the Son of God afresh and of putting Him to an open shame: but these, His friends—to taste of the pleasures that are at His right hand, and then to prefer the pleasures of the world which is His enemy . . . is there not greater grace: grace more abounding, when to these, while the terror of His

power is displayed, there is held out again the sceptre of His grace?—God resisteth the proud, in the outside world, He resisteth the proud when they rise up in His own Church, but with each, this is His strange work : He gives grace to the humble. “Submit yourselves therefore to God : Be wise now therefore O ye kings : be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling.”

**Greater
grace.**

Submit yourselves to God, this is the sum and substance of the passage before us, it is the exhortation which gathers up all the others into itself, it is the thought which, as the apostle dwells upon it, assumes so many forms, it is the near at hand duty which, that he might the more urgently press upon his hearers, he holds up before them, now in one aspect and now in another. Submit yourselves to God : yes, it is all there, and if they will but consider it closely they will see it all. But he will help them to

**This apostle
does not deal
in vague
generalities.**

consider it : he will not deal in mere generalities, these too often cover up the truth they were meant to open up ; if he were to leave them to these maybe they would miss the very thing he wants them to see ! They have been drawing off from God, holding aloof from Him, not enjoying, because not seeking communion with Him, and, perhaps, they are but vaguely conscious of this : well, he will not run the risk of letting them remain thus by simply saying “Submit to God ;” he will tell them, and tell them plainly, that they have been removing themselves far away from Him, and that they will need to come near. Satan has been very busy with them, there would not have been these wars and battles, these factions and strifes, these envyings and strifes, if he, the stirrer-up of strife, the murderer from the beginning, had not been among them and in them though unseen ; they have been giving place to him, else he could not have stirred them up to such flagrant transgressions of their Master’s will : well, then, if they would submit to God, they must resist God’s foe, they must set themselves no longer against God, but against God’s enemy, and, His word for it, they should not fail. In the very act of drawing off from God and giving place to God’s foe, they

have been staining their hands and defiling their hearts, the hands uplifted to strike at a brother, the hearts proudly swelling with thoughts of self-elation! Are not these stained, defiled? But to come with these into the presence of God! Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord, or who shall stand in His holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart, who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully! Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double minded! Estranging themselves from God, giving place to God's foe, defiling themselves with pride and all unrighteousness, they had been contenting themselves with the joys which for a season are experienced in the midst of and along with these; the joys which the world can give when it has given power and position to those who have long set their heart upon them, joy which is accompanied even with laughter of a sort, the sneer which is cast at them it has cast down: the self-satisfied ha! ha! with which it contemplates the discomfiture of those in whose discomfiture it sees its own exaltation. But joy of this sort, laughter of this sort, and submission to God: why this joy, this laughter, must be repented of if a man would be admitted into the presence of God: laughter of this kind must be turned into mourning, joy of this kind must be turned into heaviness, dejection, contrition; and the sinners, the double minded, must be afflicted, and mourn, and weep. Repenting after this fashion, they will submit, nay, they will humble themselves in the sight of the Lord, they will take the right measure of themselves in His presence: they will see there how little they are, how unworthy they are, and ashamed of themselves, they will cast themselves at His feet who the moment He sees them there will lift them up!

"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep; let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He shall exalt you."

It is all contained you observe in that one word, "submit." Submit yourselves to God, and it might be sufficient to have thus drawn thoughtful attention to it, were it not that in one of the special exhortations following upon it there is something which has been said to be foreign to the apostle's modes of thought: his explicit recognition, namely, of the existence, personality, and power of

**The witness
of James
to the
personality
of Satan.**

that evil spirit who under various names is known in Scripture throughout as the enemy of God and man. When those who wish to teach that sin originates entirely in the heart of man himself, that

it has not at all any of its beginnings, impulses, or suggestions from one who is other than man, are asked to prove this from Scripture, they turn to the apostle James where he tells that "every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed: then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." There, say they, there is nothing about a supernatural wicked spirit, nothing about a seducing tempter of whom one is to beware, against whom one is to watch: "every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust." And is there nothing here of what Paul says about "putting on the whole armour of God that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil, for that we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places?" Nothing here of

**Compare
Scripture
with
Scripture.**

what Peter says about our adversary the devil walking about as a restless and bloodthirsty lion seeking whom he might devour, and whom we were to resist, steadfast in the faith? Nothing

here of what John says about the distinction between the children of God and the children of the devil: nothing here of the liar and murderer from the beginning who abode not in the truth? And yet men will quote just what serves a particular end, and ignore what refuses to serve that end. Men will quote the first chapter of James and not the fourth. It is quite true that James says that "every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust," and that saying this he says what is true; but he does not

say that there is not an evil spirit, an unseen tempter behind who inflames these "own lusts," who entices men to keep thinking about the ways and means to gratify their "own lusts," till they become unrestrainable, uncontrollable, so that no price is too high to pay for their gratification. James does not say there is no such tempter, nay, he says there is, for he takes up the very language itself of these other apostles, more emphatically even than they do: for while one says, "neither give place to the devil"; and another, "be sober, be vigilant, and steadfast in the faith, resist your adversary the devil"; and another still, "we are not ignorant of his devices," this apostle tells us not only to resist him, but promises that if we do he shall flee from us, that if we assert ourselves against him he has no power over us, but must fall or flee before us.

The point to be noticed here is this, that while James analyses more minutely than any of the other apostles the nature of the working of sin in the heart, and that while he more explicitly than the others shows the process and working of sin in the heart of the sinner, and so convicts him of responsibility for it, he at the same time, by recognising the existence of the unseen tempter, recognises the fearful power for evil such a tempter can wield, insinuating himself as he can so secretly into the native lusts of men's hearts as to be almost incapable of detection, certainly incapable of detection without great wariness, without watchfulness unto prayer. If this spiritual foe were what at first sight the apostle Peter seems to say he is, "a roaring lion," letting everyone hear where he was, he could not be the hurtful foe he is represented to be, men would know where he was and would easily avoid him: but this is not what Peter means, and it is not what he says: it is a restless, hungry lion that he speaks of, it is his insatiable greed of human souls, his inextinguishable hatred of the works of God's hands. A lion; yes, a hungry, restless lion; but see with what silent, stealthy tread it glides near its prey; mark how still it is as it crouches down before it darts like a flame of fire to kill and devour. "Be sober, be vigilant"! No need if the adversary is walking about roaring: ah, but what

A roaring, or
a hungry
lion, which?

if he be even now crouching near at hand; what if to your unwary ear there be no hint of hostile presence while already he is hurling all his force against you to beat you to the ground, to devour? Is there no need to be sober, to be vigilant now?

The thing that strikes one in the tone of the Scripture writers when they are speaking of this enemy of God and man, is the solemnity of it, the burdened sense they have of his near and terrible power, the urgent need that men should ever be alive to

it that they might not be overtaken by his wiles. Paul, James, Peter, John, our Lord, the moment they touch upon this subject seem to come under the very shadow, as if the chill of something evil were at hand, they hasten to warn their readers and hearers against what may be their ruin; they plead with them not to give place to, but with all soberness and vigilance to "resist" the devil. This is not the feeling with which we in these days are accustomed to approach this dark and confessedly mysterious subject; if we approach it at all, it is with a mixture of levity, or of scepticism, or of absolute unbelief. Grotesque notions, handed down to us from rude and ignorant times, the influence of the spirit of the age which believes nothing but what it sees, a complacent philosophy which thinks it has accounted for and explained all that is said of Satan in Scripture by summing it all up under the impersonal generalisation, an evil principle; these have had such weight and influence with many in our own day that they openly scoff at the idea of anything real being meant by the Scripture writers when they say, "resist the devil."

And yet, why should any sensible man let himself be swayed by rude mediæval representations when these are contradicted by Scripture; by Scripture which confines itself in its descriptions of the enemy of God and man to his cunning and cruelty, subtlety and malice; and why resolve historical facts into what never occurred, accounting for events by an impersonal principle which only a personal agent could have performed? Our Lord was tempted in the wilderness by the devil; personal agent or impersonal principle,

The tone
of Scripture
when it
speaks of the
enemy of
God.

Personal or
impersonal,
which?

which? Did our Lord speak to him, and did he speak to our Lord? Or was there no temptation from without at all, and was it all from within? The denial strikes deep into the nature of the victory our Saviour achieved when He destroyed death and him that had the power of it. And as for the scepticism that refuses to believe in a personal evil spirit because it cannot trace him, because it cannot see him, surely this is irrational, when by the very nature of the conception itself inscrutable secrecy is the very condition of success. The idea of Satan is a secret foe, a foe who succeeds the better the more secrecy he maintains. If he exists, it is in secret. Surely it is unreasonable to say, he hides himself, therefore he does not exist. Surely it is more reasonable to say, he hides himself, and he is only acting up to his character and malignant intentions when he does hide himself. How could he strike at me if he let me see the weapon in his

The tempter
tempts
in secret.

hand? If I saw him, and knew it was he who solicited me to do what might seem even innocent in itself, I should suspect him and recoil from him.

If he exists and wishes to harm me, and I do not see him, how easily shall I be drawn to that which may be my ruin. "Surely in vain is the net spread in the sight of any bird!" Do you think there would be any need for the devil tempting a man who knowing he was the devil would be tempted by him? No! no! it is a shallow scepticism that says, "We can find no trace of him, therefore he does not exist." That he cannot be traced is proof of the very subtlety of his nature. If he wants to tempt us, he will not give us warning. If he lets us see him at all, it will be in the guise of an angel of light!

Peter, the impulsive, impetuous Peter, he who loved his Master, and who with his eyes opened would never have tempted his Master to any wrong, Peter was made the tool of the enemy of God and man! The tempter knew he could make nothing of

As Peter
learned to his
confusion.

the Christ: had nothing of his own in Him, and, therefore, could make nothing of Him: but could he not manage this by concealment and secrecy:

could he not manage this through someone He would not suspect, someone He loved, someone who would not surely urge Him to

wrong? Peter took his Master aside and when He spoke of a path of suffering, said to him, "That be far from Thee, Lord. Have pity upon Thyself and us, this is a path Thou must not walk in, this shall not be." His Master was deeply moved and displeased: was it because of the presumption, the irreverence of the disciple, or was there something else, something behind all this? "Do not set out on the path of suffering, let not the scorn of men be poured out upon Thee, submit not to a shameful death, let Thy path be one of glory, and ease, and power, and the acclamation of men." Ah! had He not heard words like these before from other lips, had not the temptation of the glory of this world been held up before Him, and had He not already recoiled from it? It is the same, another voice utters the words, but the same tempter it is that again with the old subtlety tries to tempt: he had failed before, might he not come off victorious now? Jesus was much displeased, and He turned, not to His disciple but away from him, and said, driving from His presence the real though invisible enemy with the same words with which He had repelled him before, "Get thee behind Me, Satan"; rebuking at the same time the disciple whose worldly thoughts had prepared him to be the tempter's tool: "Thou art an offence unto Me, a stone of stumbling, thou savourest not the things that be of God but the things that be of men."

It is a pitiful thing that a man's friend should become his tempter, that a man who judges and acts according to worldly principles should, through the influence he has upon others, become the occasion of causing them to err. They love you and

How a man's
friend may
become his
foe.

trust you, they are not so much on their guard with you as they are with others, and though they may not be quite sure your advice is the right one, they follow it just because it is yours. Peter was but the tool in the hands of Christ's enemy, while he thought he was Christ's friend. *He* saw lurking behind His duped disciple the dark, malicious countenance of that enemy himself and drove him from His presence. Suppose that the Master had not looked for Himself, but had trusted the advice was to be followed because it came from one who was friendly to Him; suppose,

that is, He had been as ignorant and short-sighted as we are, He might have yielded to the temptation, and the tempter had triumphed! This could not be with the Holy One of God; but how many a man among ourselves has unconsciously been the occasion of temptation to those who loved and trusted him, while he all the time was but the tool in the hands of an enemy powerful, and cunning, and malicious. Be sober: be vigilant: for your adversary the devil walketh about like a restless, hungry lion, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist, steadfast in the faith. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. The best way to get a man to resist the devil is to get him to believe that there is a devil to be resisted: when he thoroughly realises this, and when he has acted upon the truth of it persistently, sincerely, at every point, he will learn that after all the most efficacious way to overcome and reduce to nothing all the wiles of the tempter is to draw nigh to God. There, and there only, is complete safety. Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you. Amen.

The best way
to resist the
devil.

GLASGOW.

PETER RUTHERFORD.



THE AUTUMN FIRE.—“A hidden fire burns perpetually upon the hearth of the world. . . . In autumn this great conflagration becomes especially manifest. Then the flame that is slowly and mysteriously consuming every green thing bursts into vivid radiance. Every blade of grass and every leaf in the woodlands is cast into the great oven of nature; and the bright colours of their fading are literally the flames of their consuming. The golden harvest fields are glowing in the heart of the furnace. . . . By this autumn fire God, every year, purges the floor of nature. All effete substances that have served their purpose in the old form are burnt up. Everywhere God makes sweet and clean the earth with fire.”—*Hugh Macmillan, LL.D.*

GERMS OF PRACTICAL THOUGHT EVOLVED FROM THE APOCALYPSE.

[The writer of these Homiletic Sketches aims not to decide between the numerous theories and speculations which the interpreters of this book have propounded. So far as his work is concerned it does not matter who the author may be, the exact time in which he lived, the place of his writing, or the peculiarities of his language. The whole book appears to his mind as a *grand, prophetic poem*, full of strange and grotesque symbols. As a prophecy, some have regarded it as *already fulfilled*, such as Grotius, Hammond, Bossuet, Calmet, Wetstein, Eichhorn, Hug, Herder, Ewald, Lücke, De Wette, Dusterdieck, Stuart, Lee, and Maurice. These are called the *Præterist* expositors. Some have regarded it as yet almost entirely *unfulfilled*. All events referred to, except those in the first three chapters, they take as pointing to what is yet to come. Among such interpreters in recent times are Drs. Todd, Maitland, Newton, De Burgh, &c. These are called *Futurists*. Some regard it as in a *progressive course* of fulfilment, running on from the first century to the end of time. Amongst these interpreters the following names are included: Mede, Sir I. Newton, Vitringa, Bengel, Woodhouse, Faber, E. B. Elliott, Wordsworth, Hengstenberg, Ebrard, &c. These are called *Historical* expositors. The present Homiletic Sketches will be drawn in the light of this school. The whole book is a symbolical representation of a great moral campaign between right and wrong, running on from the dawn of the Christian era to the crash of doom. Babylon here is, so to say, the metropolis of evil and Jerusalem the metropolis of good. The battle is not between the mere forms, organizations, and institutions of good and evil, but between their *spirit*, their essence. The victories of Christ here are, to use the language of Carpenter, "against all wrong-thoughtedness, wrong-heartedness, and wrong-spiritedness."]

No. X.

The Words of Christ to the Congregation at Smyrna.

"AND UNTO THE ANGEL OF THE CHURCH IN SMYRNA WRITE; THESE THINGS SAITH THE FIRST AND THE LAST, WHICH WAS DEAD, AND IS ALIVE; I KNOW THY WORKS, AND TRIBULATION, AND POVERTY, (BUT THOU ART RICH) AND I KNOW THE BLASPHEMY OF THEM WHICH SAY THEY ARE JEWS, AND ARE NOT, BUT ARE THE SYNAGOGUE OF SATAN. FEAR NONE OF THOSE THINGS WHICH THOU SHALT SUFFER: BEHOLD, THE DEVIL SHALL CAST SOME OF YOU INTO PRISON, THAT YE MAY BE TRIED; AND YE SHALL HAVE TRIBULATION TEN DAYS: BE THOU FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH, AND I WILL GIVE THEE A CROWN OF LIFE. HE THAT HATH AN EAR, LET HIM HEAR WHAT THE SPIRIT SAITH UNTO THE CHURCHES; HE THAT OVERCOMETH SHALL NOT BE HURT OF THE SECOND DEATH."—*Rev. ii. 8-11.*

THIS letter is addressed to the Church at Smyrna. "Smyrna is not mentioned elsewhere in Scripture, so that we have no means of ascertaining when, and by whom, the Christian

faith was first planted there. We may, however, conjecture that that great commercial city did not escape attention either by St. Paul or his associates in missionary effort

during his three years' stay at Ephesus. Smyrna stands at the head of one of the finest bays in the world, and from its central position, its easy access and excellent harbour, it commands the commerce of the Levant. It is the chief city of Ionia, and is situate about forty miles north of Ephesus. It was a very ancient city, and was one of the seven that claimed to be the birthplace of Homer; and it is considered that its claim in this respect was better founded than that of any of the other cities which contended for the honour. It was subject to various vicissitudes both physically and politically. It was overthrown by earthquakes, damaged by conflagrations, laid waste by invasion, and held in turn by Æolians, Ionians, Lydians and Macedonians. In A.D. 177 it was destroyed by an earthquake, but rebuilt by Marcus Aurelius, with more than its former splendour. It is now one of the most flourishing of the cities of Asia Minor, and, indeed, the most important. Its population amounts to 140,000, of whom there are 20,000 Greeks, 8,000 Armen-

ians, about 2,000 Europeans, and 7,000 Jews. There are more Christians in Smyrna than in any other Turkish city in the world; and it is therefore peculiarly unclean in the eyes of the strict Moslems, who call it Giaour Izmir, or Infidel Smyrna. Religious toleration has always been more fully permitted in Smyrna than in any other cities under Mahomedan control, and rarely has Turkish fanaticism been directed against Europeans. It is a great centre of missionary effort; and, in Smyrna the light of Christianity has never been extinct from apostolic times."—*Dr. Tait.*

In this Epistle there are five points that arrest our attention.—*Wealth in poverty*—*Fiends in religion*—*Saints in persecution*—*Duty in trial*,—and *Victory in death.*

I.—WEALTH IN POVERTY.
"I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, but thou art rich." I know thy tribulation, and thy poverty. Poverty here is secular, not spiritual; the wealth spiritual, not secular. These two conditions of being are separable,

and are, in the vast majority of cases in human life, detached. Sometimes you find, as in the case of the Laodiceans, secular wealth associated with spiritual poverty; and modern society here in England abounds with examples of this condition. Secular princes, moral paupers; but in Smyrna the case is different. It does not seem morally proper that, according to the order of administrative righteousness, these two conditions should be separate. The sight of secular abundance, where there is moral destitution—the destitution of true virtue—is repugnant at once to our conscience and our reason. Nor is the sight of virtuous affluence in connection with secular indigence and want a less incongruous sight. Antecedently we should have concluded that, under the government of righteousness, in proportion to a man's moral excellence will be his temporal prosperity, and the converse. Looking at these conditions, separate as they seem to have been in the case of Smyrnan Christians, which is the better? Decidedly the condition of spiritual wealth

with secular poverty, and for the following reasons: (1) *Secular wealth is of contingent value, spiritual is of absolute worth.* All earthly property is but life-leased, and all life-leased property decreases in value every day. Not so spiritual; in all worlds and in all times it is of equal worth. (2) *Spiritual wealth is essentially virtuous, not so secular.* There is no virtue in the possession of material wealth. It comes to a man sometimes independently of his efforts, and often by efforts that involve the sacrifice of all the great principles of religion and fair dealing. Wealth may, indeed, often stand as the effect and sign of great tact, keen-sightedness, and resolute perseverance, but not always, alas, of righteous dealing. The history of fortune making is too often the history of low cunning, moral falsehood, and legal fraud. *Moral* wealth, however, is virtue itself; all must feel it is praiseworthy; it secures the well done of conscience, the approval of all pure intelligences, and of the great God Himself. It is intrinsically meritorious and praiseworthy.

(3) *Spiritual wealth is essentially a blessing, secular often a bane.* Virtue is its own reward; it is the paradise of the soul. But secular wealth often undermines the health, enfeebles the intellect, and carnalises the heart. (4) *Spiritual wealth is inalienable; secular is not.* How often temporal wealth takes to itself wings and flies away. At death all goes; not a fraction is carried into eternity. Not so spiritual. Character we carry with us wherever we go. (5) *Spiritual wealth commands moral respect, not so secular.* A wretched flunkeyism shouts Hosannah to a man in lordly mansions, or wrapt in purple robes, however corrupt in heart he might be. But strip the hero of his grandeur, and reduce him to pauperism and beggary, and the miserable devotee will recoil with disgust. But spiritual wealth commands moral reverence everywhere. Here we have

II.—FIENDS IN RELIGION.

"I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews and (they) are not, but are the (a) synagogue of Satan." Though the "Jews" here

described are fiendishly bad they had their synagogue, their place of worship, they, perhaps, attended to the forms of religion, read and expounded the Scriptures in their own way, but their religion was fiendish. "*Are the synagogue of Satan.*" Satan has ever had much to do with religion. Religion, not Godliness, is at once his shrine and his instrument. Religion has been and still is the greatest curse of the world; it is the nursery and the arena of every fiendish sentiment. It was religion that put to death the Son of God Himself. There are Churches and conventicles that are rather the synagogues of Satan than the temples of Christ; in their assemblies there are fiends in human form, service, and voice. They breathe the spirit of intolerant sectarianism and bigotry, and disseminate degrading and blasphemous views of the all-loving Maker and Manager of the universe. The difference between what is called religion and Christianity is the difference between light and darkness—life and death. Satan has ever had his synagogues. Here we have

III.—SAINTS IN PERSECUTION.

"Fear none of these things which thou shalt suffer: behold the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried: and ye shall have tribulation ten days." Christ when on earth assured His disciples that they should have "*tribulation*." In the world they shall have "*tribulation*." And now from the heights of eternity He sounds the same warning. The words suggest four things concerning their persecution.

First: *It was religious*. It came from those who belonged to the synagogue, and those who prided themselves on being Jews—descendants of Abraham who was the father

of the faithful. A spurious religion has ever been the chiefest and the bitterest fountain of persecution. Inquisitions have been constructed, chains have been forged, tortures have been inflicted, and martyr-fires been kindled by the men of the synagogue.

Secondly: The persecution was *severe*. "*I know thy tribulation*." It consists of impoverishment, "blasphemy," and reviling, and imprisonment. "*Cast some of you into prison*." Corrupt religion dries up the fountains of social sympathy in the human breast, dehumanises human nature—turns man into a devil.*

* Referring to this subject, the following remarks from a modern expositor will repay perusal.—"It would not be for your good, and it would not be for the good of God's cause on earth that your false parts should be covered up and disguised to the end, or that your life on earth should be one of smooth, easy, tranquil routine, making no demand upon your principles, upon your courage, or upon your Divine strength: you are to be cast even into prison that you may be tried." --DR. VAUGHAN.

* "Vast numbers of Jews had congregated in Smyrna for the sake of commerce, and whenever they had the opportunity of resisting Christianity, they were not less zealous than Alexander the coppersmith, and his companions at Ephesus, in waging war against its supporters; and the missionaries of the cross had as much to fear from them as from the Bacchus worshippers with whom they were surrounded. It is thought, not without some probability, that the martyrdom of Germanicus and others of Smyrna, who suffered under Marcus Aurelius, is alluded to in a passage where it is said—'The devil shall cast some of you into prison;' and we know from the manner in which the Jews joined with satanic rage in carrying out the martyrdom of Polycarp, how virulent they were in their persecution of the Christians, and how powerful as a body they were in Smyrna. Smyrna, in ecclesiastical history, is celebrated as the Church over which Polycarp

Thirdly : The persecution was *testing*. "*That ye may be tried.*" As if Christ had said you are to be subject to a trying, a sifting, a testing process. It must be shown, to yourselves and to those who look on, what there is in you of empty, hollow, cowardly profession. I cannot excuse you from this necessity.

Fourthly : The persecution was "*short.*" "*Ten days.*" It

is idle, puerile, to enquire what exact period of time is involved in these words. I take the idea to mean brevity. Ten days are a short period. All the afflictions of the good are brief. "Our light afflictions," &c. The storm may be sharp, but shall be short. Great trials seldom last long. The sufferings of the good here are not penal but disciplinary; not judicial but paternal. "What son is he

presided as Bishop. Polycarp was the disciple of St. John, and there is a strong probability that he was the Angel of the Church here addressed. He was contemporary with St. Ignatius, who was also a disciple of St. John, and who suffered martyrdom in A.D. 107, eleven years after the messages to the Churches were delivered. Now there are two letters of Ignatius extant, one addressed to the Church at Smyrna, written by him from Troas, and the other addressed directly to Polycarp, who was then Bishop of Smyrna. Archbishop Usher is at considerable pains to show that Polycarp was the Angel of the Church at Smyrna, over which Church he must have presided seventy-four years. That he was an extremely old man when, in A.D. 167, he suffered martyrdom, we learn from the interrogation of the proconsul, who after asking him if he was Polycarp, added, 'Have pity on thy own great age.' When further urged to reproach Christ and his life would be spared, he said, 'Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He hath never wronged me, and how can I blaspheme my King who hath saved me?' These eighty and six years cannot be the entire age of Polycarp, but the period which elapsed from his conversion, which must have taken place according to this calculation in A.D. 81, so that fifteen years must have passed from the time he first knew Christ until the epistle to the Church at Smyrna was written. 'This,' says Archbishop Trench, 'will afford quite sufficient time for his promotion to the highest seat of honour in the Church.' But positive testimony is borne to this fact by Trendeus, who affirms that he had in his youth often talked with Polycarp, who had been consecrated Bishop of the Church at Smyrna, by St. John; and like testimony is given by Tertullian. If then we are to regard Polycarp as the Angel of the Church of Smyrna, there will be considerable light thrown upon the particular references mentioned in the message to that Church, especially those relating to them who say they are Jews, but are not; and the exhortation and promise at the end of the epistle will have their apposite force and application.

"Τάδεi λέγει ὁ πρῶτος καὶ ὁ ἔσχατος, ὃς ἐγένετο νεκρὸς, καὶ ἐξήρσεν
these things saith the first and the last, which was dead and lived again. The Head

that the father chasteneth not," &c. Here we have—

IV.—DUTY IN TRIAL. How are the trials to be endured ?

First: With *courage*. Servile fear is at once an unvirtuous and pernicious element in the mind, it is inimical to the healthy growth of our faculties and to the maturing of our moral manhood. Hence Christ everywhere proscribes it. He enjoins courage "*Fear not*," be intrepid, be brave,

endure with magnanimity, struggle with invincibility. "None of these things move me," said Paul, and—

Secondly: He enjoins *faithfulness*. "*Be faithful*." Do not let the fiercest storms cause you to swerve one iota from rectitude. "Quit you like men," "Be strong in the Lord." Be faithful to your God and your conscience.

Thirdly: He enjoins *perseverance*. "*Unto death*."

of the Church here reveals Himself as One who had triumphed over death, and by that victory was able to sustain those who were about to undergo cruel torments and meet death in its most terrible form. Wild beasts and fire were the dread alternatives which the heathen persecutors presented before the suffering Christians. When the proconsul said to Polycarp, 'I have wild beasts; I will expose you to them unless you repent.' 'Call them,' replied the martyr; 'our minds are not to be changed from the better to the worse, but it is a good thing to be changed from evil to good.' 'I will tame your spirit by fire,' said the proconsul, 'since you despise the wild beasts.' 'You threaten me with fire,' answered Polycarp, 'which burns for a moment and will soon be extinct; but you are ignorant of the future judgment and of that fire that is reserved for the ungodly.' What could have given martyrs such courage—what but the conscious presence of Him who walked with the three children in the fiery furnace of Babylon? It is recorded that the multitude of Jews and Gentiles, who clamoured loudly against Polycarp, called on the Asiarch, Philip, that he would loose a lion upon him; and the popular cry of the heathen in times of persecution was '*Christianos ad Leonem!*' Now under such circumstances nothing could bear them up but the assurance that they were in the hands of Him who is 'the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever;' who passed through the bitter pangs of death, and is now alive for evermore. Death in its most appalling forms might be near at hand, the most cruel persecution that ever was invented by the malignity of the servants of the Prince of Darkness might be imminent—but whence those fears? 'When thou passest through the fire thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.' Like the bush at Horeb, the Church may burn, but it will not be consumed, for Christ is in the midst of it. They may kill the poor body, but they cannot kill the soul, which, when the earthly pitcher is broken, shall shine like Gideon's lamps. Like the chariot of fire in which the prophet ascended, so the flame of persecution, how fiercely soever it may burn, will only bear the soul of the martyr to the bosom of his God."—ANDREW TAIT, LL.D., F.R.S.E.

If you can be faithful up to death you will be faithful afterwards, for your obligations will remain, your temptations will be gone.

Fourthly: He enjoins *reflectiveness*. "*He that hath an ear let him hear what the spirit saith unto the Churches*" (see page 110). Let the mind ever rest in deep and devout thought on the Divine which is speaking everywhere on all things. Here we have—

V.—VICTORY IN DEATH.
"He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death."
 The "*second death*" is the

death of the soul, the death of that which makes all life valuable. From such a death the truly loyal and faithful shall be delivered, and more than this, he shall have a crown and a wreath of life. A crown stands for the most elevated distinction, the highest honour. This distinction James calls "a crown of life." Paul, "a crown of glory." Peter, "a crown of righteousness." What is the crown of life? Perfect moral manhood.

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

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THE ONENESS OF LIFE.—"Never for a moment let us try to separate, or dream that we can separate, our individual life from our national. Our vocation is the same in the most private occupations, and when we are fulfilling what are called our duties as citizens. Every duty is a civic duty. We are fighting in our closets for our nation if we are fighting truly for ourselves: our soldiers should go out to open battle against the foes of freedom and order with the same recollections, with same sense of self-devotion as that which we would cultivate at home."—Rev. F. D. MAURICE.

SEEDS OF SERMONS ON THE SECOND BOOK OF THE KINGS.

Wickedness, Retribution, & Divine Control as Revealed in Nebuchadnezzar's Invasion of Judah.

"IN HIS DAYS NEBUCHADNEZZAR," &c.—2 *Kings* xxiv., xxv.

(Continued from page 114.)

HAVING noticed as the first division the *wickedness of man* which, as revealed in this chapter, is characterised by *inveteracy, tyranny, inhumanity* and *profanity*, we proceed to notice—

II.—The RETRIBUTION OF HEAVEN. All the terrible miseries here recorded came upon the Jewish people as the consequence of their wickedness—wickedness which had commenced with their remotest forefathers, and which had run down for centuries, increasing in volume, turpidity, and perniciousness, from generation to generation, century to century, even to the present time, when they were "filling up the measure of their iniquities." Heaven has linked sin and suffering together by chains stronger than adamant—chains that can never be broken. As

rivers follow the ocean, as planets pursue the sun, suffering follows sin. Nebuchadnezzar and his battalions came to Jerusalem as Heaven's officers of retribution. "*He came, he, and all his hosts, against Jerusalem, and pitched against it; and they built forts against it round about.*" And famine also, grim and inexorable, came on the same dire mission. "*And on the ninth day of the fourth month the famine prevailed in the city, and there was no bread for the people of the land.*" In the retribution here displayed we are reminded of two facts—

First: *That the sins of one man may bring misery on millions.* "Surely at the commandment of the Lord came this upon Judah, to remove them out of His sight, for the sins of Manasseh,

according to all that he did; and also for the innocent blood that he shed: for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood; which the Lord would not pardon." Manasseh had perpetrated great crimes, and he had been sleeping in his grave for many a long year, but the consequences of his crimes follow him. All the misery here recorded comes to the people "*for the sins of Manasseh.*" Here is the hereditary principle of Divine government. "The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge." Everywhere we see retribution thus acting. Physically, socially, intellectually, we find men everywhere suffering for the sins of others, the present generation suffering for the past. Is not justice outraged in all this? The question is natural, but there are considerations, such as the following, that may weaken its force or extract its sting. How common it is for men to complain of retribution coming to them in this form. Some say, had it not been for the intemperance and indolence of our fathers, instead of being in poverty we should

have been in affluence; and sometimes we hear them say, the consumption that is eating up my life, the gout that racks my frame, the disease that infests my blood, I can trace to the sins and follies of my ancestors. Will not the following facts anyhow modify the severity of the complaint. (1) That no man is made to suffer more than he actually deserves on account of his own personal sin. How few, if any, adults can be found who, in their severest sufferings, do not feel bound in their own consciences that they deserve the whole, if not more. (2) That the evils which thus descend to us from our ancestors are not to be compared with those we produce ourselves. With the sufferings that come upon you through others irrespective of your own choice and conduct, you can feel no *remorse* which is the bitterest ingredient in the cup of human woe. The most bitter are the compunctions felt for the sufferings we have brought directly on ourselves. (3) That whilst the hereditary principle of the Divine government entails evils, it also entails good.

Great as are the evils that have come down to us from posterity, great also is the good. Whence, as a nation, came our freedom, our religious privileges, and the countless blessings of our civilisation? From the men of the past. Like a goodly ark, richly freighted, our national enjoyments came floating down to us on the surging waves, crimsoned with the blood of bygone centuries. Whilst groaning then under the evils that we have received from the past, let us not fail to estimate the immense good that bygone times have entailed. (4) This hereditary principle tends to restrain vice and stimulate virtue. The parent knowing, as all parents must know, the immense influence he exerts upon his offspring, and having the common natural affection, will be set more or less on his guard; he will restrain evil passions which otherwise he would allow to sport with uncontrolled power, and prosecute efforts of a virtuous tendency, which otherwise he would entirely neglect.*

Secondly: *The pernicious influence of a man's sin in the world may continue after his conversion.* Manasseh repented of the sins he had committed, and received the favours of his God. Notwithstanding we find men here suffering on account of the sins he had committed, it would appear from 2 Chronicles xxxiii. 13 that Manasseh was a converted man,—“Then Manasseh knew that the Lord He was God.”† Genuine conversion detaches a man to some extent from the consequences of his own sins. He may, and does, ultimately overcome their baneful influences, but it does not prevent the evil consequence of his crimes flowing down to others. Although Manasseh ascended to heaven, cleansed from his sins, to mingle with the pure, the crimes he perpetrated still continue to exert their pernicious influence on the earth. What a sad thought is this!—a thought that should restrain us from all evil, and stimulate us at all times to walk in the light of righteousness and truth.

* For further illustration of these thoughts, see Volume IX., page 277.

† See *Homilist*, Volume XXI., page 1.

Thirdly : *That retribution, though it may move slowly, yet will move surely.* A hundred years had well-nigh passed away, and several generations had come and gone since Manasseh had gone to his grave. Yet avenging justice appears at last and wreaks upon others the terrible effects of his crimes. The cruelties suffered by the inhabitants during this siege were terrible beyond all description. The "Lamentations" of Jeremiah present us with vivid pictures of these. Enraged by their rebellion and vigorous opposition Nebuchadnezzar, when he took the city, "had no compassion on young men or maiden, old man or him that stooped for age." Famine had done its work before the conqueror entered; and children swooning in the streets for hunger, princes raking dunghills for a morsel, and other hideous and affecting sights showed the extremities to which the people were driven. When the Chaldeans rushed through the breach, the usual brutalities were perpetrated by the licentious soldiers. The famished

fugitives were pursued with relentless fury. The Chaldeans were hounded on by the Edomites and other neighbours of the Jews, who knew the country well, and like bloodhounds tracked to the holes and caves such as had escaped from the city. Dead bodies lay piled in heaps upon the streets. Multitudes of these were mere boys and girls. Princes were hanged by their hand, enduring the slow horrors of the crucifixion. Some seem to have been consigned to subterranean dungeons, perhaps, on the shores of the Dead Sea, where "Waters flowed over their head;"—

"A double dungeon, wall, and cave,
Have made, and like a living grave
Below the surface of the lake
The dark vault lies wherein they
lay,
And there they would have smiled
to see
The death that would have set
them free."—*Professor Blackie.*

The tardy march of retribution men have made the occasion and the reason of continued depravity, "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily," &c.

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(*To be continued.*)

Seedlings.

Days of the Christian Year.

Luke x. 31.

(*Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity.*)

“HE PASSED BY ON THE OTHER
SIDE.”

THESE words, repeated in the following verse, suggest—

I.—THAT GUILTY NEGLIGENCE FORMS A LARGE PART OF HUMAN SIN. No doubt there is a large measure of *guilty ignorance* in the minds of men,—perhaps larger than they think. We ought to know many things of which we are ignorant, to recognise much that is quite strange to us, to be perfectly familiar with that with which we have the slenderest acquaintance. We give no time and take no trouble to be masters of great realities and redeeming, elevating truths, when it is our sacred duty to make them matters of serious concern, of diligent inquiry, of patient and laborious pursuit. But it is also true that a large proportion of human guilt is found in a *culpable avoidance* of plain duty and obvious opportunity. Men “pass by” that which they know should detain them; they leave untouched that which they are well aware should occupy their time and call out

their strenuous exertion. This is true in reference to (1) The public worship of God; (2) The decisive choice of Jesus Christ as the Saviour of the soul and the Lord of the life; (3) The open avowal of our attachment to Jesus Christ; (4) The redress of the wrongs (political or social or economical) which our fellow-citizens are suffering; (5) Active participation in the instruction of the ignorant and in the evangelization of the criminal, the vicious, the ungodly, &c.

II.—THAT WE ARE CONSTANTLY TRYING TO LESSEN OUR GUILT IN OUR OWN EYES. Both priest and Levite shrank from going *close by* their wronged and suffering countryman without offering to render help; so they passed by *on the other side*. They could leave him to himself, a little distance intervening, though they would have been ashamed to pass close by without assisting: they would not put their conscience to so severe a test as that, lest it should be too strong for their inclination. So they shirked their duty and lost their opportunity by taking a position in which the one and the other were reduced by some few degrees in their own estimation.

They deliberately veiled obligation and opportunity lest these should be too palpable and too pressing. Is not this a constant, a universal habit of the sinful soul? Do we not take care to present our duty in such a form that there shall seem to be the least possible guilt in neglecting it. We do not deliberately face it and defiantly refuse it; we shut, or half shut, our eyes to it, and let it be as if we were unconscious of its presence: we "pass by on the other side." There are many ways of minimising duty or shutting out the sight of opportunity. We know how to raise doubts as to its importance, or its urgency, or the character of our colleagues, or our own sufficiency, or the timeliness of our interposition, or the construction that will be put on our action by others, &c. We rarely say, "I will not" meet this obligation or render this service. We say, "I would, if ——." We are all adepts at passing by "on the other side."

III.—THAT BY THIS RESORT WE ONLY DECEIVE OURSELVES. We very likely do that, for self-delusion is one of the commonest as it is one of the saddest of issues (Matt. xxv. 44). But we seldom deceive man, our brother, and we never deceive God. And in His judgment, to shirk duty and to shrink from obligation may be but one

degree less guilty than rebellious refusal to do the one or to accept the other.

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Mark xii. 34.

(*The Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity.*)

"THOU ART NOT FAR FROM THE
KINGDOM OF GOD."

THERE are two aspects of "the kingdom of God" at which we might profitably look. First: Its *external* aspect, in which we regard (*a*) its constitution; (*b*) its institutions; (*c*) its citizens; (*d*) its distinctive features, which are (1) righteousness; (2) liberty; (3) peace; (4) restorative energy. Second: Its *inward* aspect, in which we regard (*a*) its principles; (*b*) its vitality. "The kingdom of God is within you." This is introductory to a consideration of our text which leads us to ask—

I.—WHAT IS THE SENSE IN WHICH A SOUL CAN BE SAID TO BE "NOT FAR FROM THE KINGDOM OF GOD." None of us in christendom "are far from the kingdom of God" in its external aspect; but who is far from it in its inward aspect? Some. But a soul is "not far from the kingdom of God" when it is marked by (1) *knowledge of right*. When its

reason, its conscience, its love so approves the right as to declare concerning the Great Teacher "Thou has well said." Or when it is marked by (2) *Recognition of its claims*. Such an one "answers discreetly."

II.—WHAT THE POSSIBILITY, WHAT THE DUTY, WHAT THE PERIL OF THOSE who are "not far from the kingdom of God?" (1) What the *possibility*? They are near, and therefore they can enter into it; they can have it enter them. (2) What the *duty*? Enter it. Let it enter you. (a) For your own sake. (b) For the kingdom's sake. (c) For the King's sake. He is so good, so true. He founded the kingdom in tears and blood, and *His own*. (3) What is the *peril*? Just this, that the Divine Voice that now says "thou art not far," may have to say, some day,—thou art now very far, though thou wast near. To the lost the question may come,—were *wast* thou? And that question will stir the deepest sorrow of ruined souls. For

"A sorrow's crown of sorrows
Is remembering happier things."

EDITOR.

Mark xvi. 1-8.

(The Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity.)

"AND WHEN THE SABBATH WAS PAST, MARY MAGDALENE, AND MARY THE MOTHER OF JAMES, AND SALOME, HAD BOUGHT SWEET SPICES, THAT THEY MIGHT COME AND ANOINT HIM. AND VERY EARLY IN THE MORNING THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK, THEY CAME UNTO THE SEPULCHRE AT THE RISING OF THE SUN. AND THEY SAID AMONG THEMSELVES, WHO SHALL ROLL US AWAY THE STONE FROM THE DOOR OF THE SEPULCHRE? AND WHEN THEY LOOKED, THEY SAW THAT THE STONE WAS ROLLED AWAY: FOR IT WAS VERY GREAT. AND ENTERING INTO THE SEPULCHRE, THEY SAW A YOUNG MAN SITTING ON THE RIGHT SIDE, CLOTHED IN A LONG WHITE GARMENT; AND THEY WERE AFFRIGHTED. AND HE SAITH UNTO THEM, BE NOT AFFRIGHTED: YE SEEK JESUS OF NAZARETH, WHICH WAS CRUCIFIED: HE IS RISEN; HE IS NOT HERE: BEHOLD THE PLACE WHERE THEY LAID HIM. BUT GO YOUR WAY, TELL HIS DISCIPLES AND PETER THAT HE GOETH BEFORE YOU INTO GALILEE: THERE SHALL YE SEE HIM, AS HE SAID UNTO YOU. AND THEY WENT OUT QUICKLY, AND FLED FROM THE SEPULCHRE; FOR THEY TREMBLED AND WERE AMAZED: NEITHER SAID THEY ANY THING

TO ANY MAN; FOR THEY WERE AFRAID."

OTHER biographies end at death. Not so with the Great Biography. Some of its chief events are posthumous. Notably the Resurrection. The apostles went everywhere preaching "Jesus and the resurrection." The stupendous importance of our Lord's resurrection may be realised by dwelling on four facts. (1) It is recorded by all four evangelists. (2) It interested the disciples and the faithful women. (3) It was the theme of apostolic preaching. (4) It concerned the inhabitants of Heaven as well as earth. We may profitably enquire—

I.—WHAT THE RESURRECTION TEACHES ABOUT THE LORD JESUS CHRIST? It is an argument for (1) *The Divinity of His mission.* If He were an impostor, death avenged the imposture; if an enthusiast, death undeceived the self-deceiver. Just so, but if He resumed life again, it is clear there was no imposture, no fanaticism. His resurrection is a triumphant proof of His truthfulness and of His rightful claim of power. (2) *The voluntariness of His sufferings.* If He could rise, surely He need not have died. He could have "saved Himself." Here is proof that He had "power to lay down His life and power to take it up

again." (3) *The unchangeableness of His character.* We can see what He is when He has endured His passion, when He has past through the throes of death. Unchanged in spirit, He exhibits the same compassionate care for His disciples, providing for their wants, forgiving their sins, meeting their perplexities. Clearly His resurrection demonstrates that His was a love that many waters could not quench.

II.—WHAT THE RESURRECTION TEACHES CONCERNING HUMANITY?

(1) *It is a pledge of our own resurrection.* The destiny of the Son of Man is identified with that of the sons of men. What "the first-fruits" are, the harvest shall be; what "the first begotten from the dead" is, all the family shall be: what "the Head" is, the whole body shall be. By His resurrection the great stone is rolled away from the sepulchre of human mortality. (2) *It is a pledge of the conquests of truth and goodness amongst men.* Whatever may seem to arraign truth and goodness, to slay them, to bury them, and to make the sepulchre as sure as it can, there shall be a resurrection by-and-bye. "*Magna est veritas et prevalebit.*" "We can do nothing against the truth but for the truth." Broken hearted patriots and philanthropists may in the hours of reverse, and

failure, and hopelessness cry, "Who will roll away the stone of ignorance, of superstition, of tyranny, of intemperance, for they are "very great." But the morning of the resurrection of truth and goodness is hastening on, and in its light men will see that the stone is rolled away already.

EDITOR.

Luke vii. 11-18.

(Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity.)

"AND IT CAME TO PASS THE DAY AFTER, THAT HE WENT INTO A CITY CALLED NAIN; AND MANY OF HIS DISCIPLES WENT WITH HIM, AND MUCH PEOPLE. NOW WHEN HE CAME NIGH TO THE GATE OF THE CITY, BEHOLD, THERE WAS A DEAD MAN CARRIED OUT, THE ONLY SON OF HIS MOTHER, AND SHE WAS A WIDOW: AND MUCH PEOPLE OF THE CITY WAS WITH HER. AND WHEN THE LORD SAW HER, HE HAD COMPASSION ON HER, AND SAID UNTO HER, WEEP NOT. AND HE CAME AND TOUCHED THE BIER: AND THEY THAT BARE HIM STOOD STILL. AND HE SAID, YOUNG MAN, I SAY UNTO THEE, ARISE. AND HE THAT WAS DEAD SAT UP, AND BEGAN TO SPEAK. AND HE DELIVERED HIM TO HIS MOTHER. AND THERE CAME A FEAR ON ALL: AND THEY GLORIFIED GOD, SAYING, THAT A GREAT

PROPHET IS RISEN UP AMONG US; AND, THAT GOD HATH VISITED HIS PEOPLE. AND THIS RUMOUR OF HIM WENT FORTH THROUGHOUT JUDEA, AND THROUGHOUT ALL THE REGION ROUND ABOUT. AND THE DISCIPLES OF JOHN SHEWED HIM OF ALL THESE THINGS."

MANY incidents proving our Lord's *human* sympathy, coupled at the same time with *superhuman* power, are found only in the Gospel by S. Luke. The tenderness of Christ in His divine nature and work is very often portrayed. This miracle is one of the touching incidents so described. Found *only* in S. Luke. Though the circumstances are well-known it is right to dwell upon the details. The *scene*: Nain. Describe its situation and beauty. The *apparently* accidental meeting of Christ and the mourning procession. Death and life meeting. The *subject*: the dead body of a youth. This is an instance of the apparent *capriciousness* of death. The least likely and the least able to be spared taken away. The young man cut down, the aged mother spared. Death is a solemn subject under any consideration. It is affecting to witness the burial of an *aged* person, to think of the past struggles ended, and to learn what a vapour and shadow is life even at its longest. It is instructive to look into the grave of

an *infant*, to think of the evils escaped and the gain acquired. Death in both is affecting, but much more in *youth*. Such was the subject of this miracle. Had lived long enough to see bright prospects and pleasures opening before him, &c. He was the "only son of his mother." Parents often have to lament over the death of their children, but there is generally some comfort left. Not so in this case. Further, the mother was "a widow." Twice, if not oftener, death had overgloomed the heart and home of the woman. Now the last blossom of hope was withered. The results of this miracle: (a) Life restored to a decaying corpse. (b) The bereaved mother comforted and made happy. (c) The spectators overawed, &c. Consider this miracle, as—

I.—PRESENTING A PICTURE OF THE SPIRITUALLY RUINED STATE OF THE WORLD. The material world grand and perfect, but yet the scene of spiritual disorder and gloom. In this train of mourners we have presented two world-wide circumstances—death and sorrow. Note three things here resulting from the ravages of death. (1) The most interesting period of life destroyed. (2) The dearest human bonds broken. (3) The deepest grief created. And such ever and

everywhere still felt. Sin the cause.

II.—PRESENTING AN ILLUSTRATION OF THE GREATNESS OF OUR LORD'S CHARACTER. Observe the *thoughts* of Christ. The mourning crowd was nothing to Christ, it was the grieving heart of the widow that touched Him. He had "compassion on her." Observe His *words*: familiar words infused with Almighty meaning and power. None can speak them as He did. Observe his *deed*. "He came and touched," &c. This miracle illustrates our Lord's character as (1) *A Teacher*. He taught wonderful doctrines. Could He confirm them? This a confirmation that He possessed the power and authority He professed to hold. (2) *A Consoler*. He could dry the tears of the mourners; remove the dark cloud shadowing heart and home. (3) *A Helper*. He put forth "the arm of the Lord." The help was almighty. Nothing impossible to Him. He spoils death of its prey and robs the grave of its sting. He who created the world and all forms of life, here recreates. With what *majesty, power, calmness, and all-sufficiency* He can and will help.

III.—AS PRESENTING AN ILLUSTRATION OF IMPORTANT SPIRITUAL TRUTHS. (a) *The advent of spiritual life*. Death is a suggestive and comprehensive figure of our sinful

spiritual state. Interruption and disorder and decay involved in the figure. Christ brings to us beauty, order, and life. He is "our life." (b) *The resurrection and restoration of the human dead.* The voice that here spoke life to the "dead young man," and comfort to the sad heart of the bereaved, will speak to "all that are in the grave." A truth which reason cannot explain, but we believe it upon His words who "is The Truth." (c) *The gladsome reunion of the future state.* "The

world to come" is to be a "home." Reunion there of those who have "gone before." Glad-some songs will there ascend from a perfected family. What rejoicing at Nain over the reunion of mother and son. A faint type of the gladsome reunion awaiting the children of the Father, and that reunion will be *for ever*. "There shall be no more death."

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The Seven Sayings from the Cross.

V.—The Saviour's Thirst.

"AFTER THIS, JESUS KNOWING THAT ALL THINGS WERE NOW ACCOMPLISHED, THAT THE SCRIPTURE MIGHT BE FULFILLED, SAITH I THIRST."—*John xix. 28.*

THE more we meditate on the death of Christ the more we wonder at its striking uniqueness, and admire the way in which the touching and mysterious story is told by the four Evangelists. There is a sense in which the Cross puts all the other incidents in the Divine life-story in the shade. For one visit we pay in thought to Capernaum we make ten to Calvary. No death of

which the world has ever heard has such attractions as Christ's. In the ordinary way it is life, not death, absorbs interest and attention. It is possible to approach the Cross by many avenues and for many purposes, but it will be little to us if it do not interpret the mind of God concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment.

As we approach the Cross *now*

we find thereon a weary, painful Sufferer. He has been there nearly six hours. Think of what this means. We are not surprised at His cry : "I thirst." It indicates of His body what "My God, My God," &c., did of His soul. Christ's were real sufferings, for He was a real man. His hunger was real—so was His weariness—so His tears, and so His thirst. This is the only reference Christ makes to His pains on the Cross, and this in *one word*. We note—

I.—THE THIRST OF THE DYING CHRIST. Was it not a type and a prophecy of His thirst for the souls of men? What keener pang than thirst? What keener desire than Christ's for the salvation of sinful man? (a) *This thirst fulfilled the Scripture* (Psalm lxxix. 21); and is not Scripture full of intimations of Christ's deeper thirst? We can hardly think of Christ apart from His yearning desire for others. (b) *This cry of thirst is from the Cross*; and how can we better interpret the mystery of the Cross than in the light of Christ's desire to bless and save. (c) *This sense of thirst indicates the close of Christ's conflict*. Just as did the hunger in the wilderness. In the supreme agony of working and atoning for others Christ forgot Himself, and thought

nothing of bodily pains and needs. But the great strife being nearly over, the physical consciousness asserts itself. And how true it is that, having done all that was needful to secure it, Christ thirsts for the world's salvation.

II.—THE OFFERING OF VINEGAR. This act followed immediately upon the cry. Matthew says that "One of them ran," as if eager to comply with what seemed to be a request for drink. The vinegar so quickly offered was gratefully accepted. Was this the act of an enemy or a friend? It looks like the first tremble of penitence, the first working of an effect from the prayer, "Father forgive them"! The offer of the mixed wine was refused, for it was but a mocking and insulting act; the gift of vinegar was accepted, for it was a sign of relenting; and perhaps it will be found at the great day that one of the crucifiers was the first man in all time to whom the words refer—"I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink." The suggestions of this humble act are many: (a) *What response are we making to Christ's great cry?* Are we attending to it or are we slothful? If our hearts are right, His very hints will be commands. (b) *Are we using energy and effort in meeting Christ's wishes?* This unnamed stranger did,—we are in many things,—why not in

this matter? (c) *The humblest offerings of help Christ will not refuse.* For in His condescension He finds refreshment and comfort in them. Our great business is to minister to the dying, yet ever-living Christ; by trying to be like Him; by loving His brethren; by seeking His lost ones; by depending upon Him, and fully trusting Him.

III.—THE RUDE REBUKE.
 “The rest said, Let be.” *i.e.*, “Leave Him alone,” “Don’t help Him”—no, not so much as with a drop of vinegar. The kind act was disapproved, and the doer of it rebuked. (a) *This is ever the world’s attitude towards the cry of Christ and those who would attend to it.* It would hinder any from ministering to Him. Its hindrances and discouragements assume a variety of forms. (b) *This is practically a reflection of the conduct of cold, formal, and unconsecrated Christians.* They would leave Christ, so they say, “to do His own work.” They discourage all “Evangelistic” effort—all enthusiastic devotion. But what then of the Divine thirst and cry? Have these no voice? Yes—but only to anointed ears. (c) *This is truly a picture of the treatment Christ receives from every unsundered soul.* “I will not bless and help the dying Christ,” such seem to say. “He shall not

see in me the travail of His soul.” “Though He hang upon the Cross, I will not refresh Him by trusting Him.” Oh, cruel heart to treat the Saviour so!

IV.—READ THE THIRST OF CHRIST IN THE LIGHT OF ETERNITY. (a) *It will surely be slaked.* “He shall see of the travail of His soul.” In the long run there will be no disappointment for Christ. His atonement will prove no haphazard work, for (b) *the thirst of Christ secures the everlasting refreshment of all who believe in Him.* By His thirst the river of life has been opened. Such a sacrifice was needed to procure such a boon. We owe everything to the death of Christ. Eternity alone can unfold all the blessing it has secured. (c) *If we are truly “crucified with Christ,” we also shall thirst after the salvation of our fellows.* And the keenness of our thirst will be measured by the greatness of our sympathy with the Saviour. We shall meet with rebuffs and discouragements, but oh what refreshment, what life, what comfort it will be to us to lead some wanderer to the Saviour’s feet. Such will be “our glory and our joy before our Lord Jesus at His coming.”

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BRISTOL.

VI.—The Finished Work.

“WHEN JESUS THEREFORE HAD RECEIVED THE VINEGAR, HE SAID, IT IS FINISHED: AND HE BOWED HIS HEAD, AND GAVE UP THE GHOST.”
John xix. 30.

THERE is much of shame about the Cross, but there is much glory; and these are glorious words. We have already heard from the dying Saviour's lips words which the Psalmist penned centuries ago. “While the crucifixion was going on Jesus mentally repeated the several verses of Psalm xxii.” It would seem that he has now reached the last. Speaking of the Lord's righteousness, the Psalmist says, “He hath done it”; and the Saviour says, “It is done.” In no other lips have the words ever had so deep and full a meaning. “Finished was His holy life—with His life His struggle—with His struggle His work—with His work the Redemption—with the Redemption the foundation of a new world.” We look at these wondrous words from various standpoints, and doing so we note:—

I.—A SIGH OF WELCOME RELIEF. All is over now. An end has come to the anxiety, toil, pain. “It is finished.” The burden is lifted, the goal is

reached, the darkness is passed, the relief has come. And the Saviour was glad. The strain had been a fearful one, the task only possible to a love more than human. The great work was cheerfully undertaken, and now the release is gladly accepted.

II.—A SIGNIFICATION OF ACCOMPLISHED TOIL. What a marvellous “it” is here. To what is reference made? Surely to the fact that (a) *the types of Scripture* are all fulfilled; (b) *the promises and prophecies* all carried out; (c) *the Son's obedience* perfected; (d) *Divine justice* fully satisfied; (e) *the everlasting righteousness* brought in. Nothing left undone that was necessary to the glory of God in saving men. It is a great thing for us to hear such words as these. Never man spake like this man in life and in death.

III.—A SONG OF EARNEST SATISFACTION. That Christ entered with all His heart and soul into the work of human redemption admits of no doubt. With what joyful satisfaction must He have reached the point at which He

could say, "It is finished." And what did this mean to Christ? (a) *My Father* is glorified and is well-pleased; (b) *My people* are safe; (c) *My mission* is accomplished. These were the notes in Christ's sweet song. Their echoes have come down the ages and have reached us. Shall we not join in the Saviour's satisfaction, and sing with love and gratitude of His great redemptive work?

IV.—A SHOUT OF COMPLETED VICTORY. "He cried with a loud voice." And proclaimed His triumph over sin, death, the world, Satan, and hell. What the Saviour shouted aloud let us not whisper. Christ's triumph was not a sham one. The powers of darkness quailed before Him. He "bruised the serpent's head." And His great victory was for us. We conquer through faith in Him. "Sin shall not have dominion over you." Only by the Cross can the curse be removed and the crown be won.

V.—A SENTENCE OF UNIVERSAL

HOPE. "It is finished." This is the central truth of the Gospel. This is the lever which can uplift the fallen universe. Let us, fearless, believe in Christ's finished work. (a) *How foolish it is to think of adding to it.* The sacrifice is offered "once for all." When you can add volume to the ocean, brightness to the sun, fragrance to the rose, or a cubit to your own stature, then think to add to the power and efficacy of the Saviour's work. (b) *How wrong to neglect and underrate it.* As those do who trust in themselves that they are righteous, and think to purchase heaven by gallant deeds and human goodness. (c) *How blessed to believe in it,* as millions have done, and found it all-sufficient to save and satisfy. (d) *What a privilege to publish it.* "It is finished"—"It is finished."

"Fain would I sound it out so loud,
That all the earth should hear."

WALTER J. MAYERS.
BRISTOL.

VII.—Calm in Death.

"AND WHEN JESUS HAD CRIED WITH A LOUD VOICE, HE SAID, FATHER, INTO THY HANDS I COMMEND MY SPIRIT: AND HAVING SAID THUS, HE GAVE UP THE GHOST."—*Luke xxiii. 46.*

ONCE again we find Jesus using words of Scripture, as His dying

language. (Ps. xxxi. 5.) This ought to make the book of Psalms

doubly dear to us. These words are like a whisper into God's ear following a shout into man's. How calm was Jesus in death, how confident. "It is finished," is fitly followed by, "Father, into Thy hands," &c. How appropriate to Christ's last moments the words: "Oh death where is thy sting?" Let us note—

I.—THE LAST NAME ON CHRIST'S LIPS. "Father." He ended as He began His work.—"Wist ye not," &c. (a) *How dear throughout His life the Father had been to Him.* He had spoken often of His Father's "house"—"work"—"hands"—"face." (b) *And He is still sure of the Father's love.* He holds to it that He is the Son of God. Life's illusions generally pass away at death. It was no illusion that God was the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Christ's death did not forfeit the Father's love, but the more fully expressed it. (c) *He is conscious also of the Father's presence.* In death as in life. How familiar are His tones—how simple—how earnest. Dying was not hard to Him. This torch lit up the dark valley for Him as it will also for us. His death was happy—glorious—triumphant.

II.—THE LAST THOUGHT OF CHRIST'S HEART. "Into Thy hands," &c. To Him God was a Person. The Living God—work-

ing—with power to guard, and help, and bless. These words were not breathed into empty air. The attitude of Jesus not that of a sinner—or a mere human creature. He speaks like an equal. Many thoughts suggested to us here. *The Father's hands* uphold the living and await the dying—how soft they are—how strong. "Jesus was now passing out of the hands of men into the hands of His Father." His language is not that of disappointment, but of love, and satisfaction, and hope. So may ours be when we come to die.

III.—THE LAST ACT OF CHRIST'S WILL. He deposited His spirit in the Father's hands. The word "commend," does not signify "recommend," but rather "to place as a deposit." Jesus left His precious treasure, as it were, in the Father's care. "He had the right as well as the will" to thus offer Himself without spot to God. This being so, may we not justly remark that (a) He died *consciously*, (b) *willingly*, not of necessity, (c) *expectantly* of His resurrection, (d) *as no other ever died.* His death as much a miracle as His birth. "He dismissed His spirit." He now actually made the atonement, by forfeiting His life. So ends this wonderful life—as wonderful at its close as at its opening. As we

linger at the Cross what lessons we may gather. Let us treasure all its teachings. (a) Let our chief anxiety be for our soul. (b) Let us learn that only God can properly care for it—to save and keep it. (c) As Jesus approached the Father, so let us come to Jesus. (d) The act of Christ may be turned by us into prayer. It was by Stephen (Acts vii. 59), and Peter surely had these words in mind when he wrote (1 Peter iv. 19). (e) Christ's dying words

may become our living words. If the Divine care be not sought by us we must fail and fall. (f) If we believe in another life we shall be ready and willing to die. For those who seriously think of the future will prepare for it by accepting the great salvation whose foundation was laid by Christ, when "He died for our sins according to the Scriptures."

WALTER J. MAYERS.

BRISTOL.

Sin's Conception and Growth.

"WHEN I SAW AMONG THE SPOILS," &c.—*Joshua* vii. 21.

NOTICE here how sin starts and grows.

I.—THE ATTRACTION. "I saw . . . a goodly Babylonish garment." Sin always presents itself as something (1) Desirable. "Goodly." (2) Attractive. "Babylonish garment." (3) Valuable. "A wedge of gold." Men differ widely as to their weak points. Achan's weak point at this time was in his eye. "I saw."

II.—THE APPETITE. "I coveted." Here is the second wrong step. The first was in allowing himself to be fascinated by what he "saw." The spoil was *devoted*. To take it was to

add theft to sacrilege. No man has a right to indulge even in thought a wrong act, or a forbidden pleasure. This it is that paves the way to sin and crime.

III.—THE ACT. "I took." Here is the final step in the fatal gradation. Here guilt culminates in crime. Here then we see the origin and growth of sin. (1) Evil thoughts and musings voluntarily entertained. "I saw." (2) Evil desires. "I coveted." (3) Evil deeds. "I took." The process is natural, as that by which oaks from acorns grow.

THOMAS KELLY.

PHILADELPHIA.

Breviaries.

Paul's Psalm of Love. (1) The Supremacy of Love.

"BUT COVET EARNESTLY THE BEST GIFTS : AND YET SHEW I UNTO YOU A MORE EXCELLENT WAY. AND NOW ABIDETH FAITH, HOPE, CHARITY, THESE THREE ; BUT THE GREATEST OF THESE IS CHARITY."—1 *Cor.* xii. 31. and xiii. 13.

AN analysis of this Psalm of Love—or, as Canon Farrar calls it, "This glorious hymn to Christian Love," may be desirable for the purpose of its continuous and thorough study. It demands such study for practical purposes to-day, for it is emphatically true of this exhortation to Love, as Conybeare says about much else in this Epistle ; "Let us not forget to thank God who so inspired His apostle that in his answers to questions of transitory interest he has laid down principles of eternal obligation. Let us trace with gratitude the providence of Him who 'out of darkness calls up light,' by whose mercy it was provided that the unchastity of the Corinthians should occasion the sacred laws of moral purity to be established for ever through the Christian world ; that their denial of the resurrection should cause these words to be recorded whereon reposes, as upon a rock that cannot be shaken, our sure and certain hope of immortality." And may we not add that their strife amongst themselves for superiority in the possession of gifts led to this great utterance about *the supremacy of love*. Paul indicates I.—LOVE'S SUPREMACY OVER ALL THE GIFTS OF THE OUTWARD LIFE. He shows that it is supreme in contrast (1) *with the church gifts* of "helps, prophesyings, tongues," &c., and in contrast (2) *with the personal gifts of almsgiving, martyrdom, &c.* Love is supreme over both these two classes of gifts. First: *Because the many may not have these, but all may possess this.* Some can never prophesy, or heal, &c., but all may love. Second: *Because the possession of outward gifts may exist without the highest life, but where love is, all else is ensured.* Where the under root of love is, *all* these virtues will be developed. Third: *Because they are transient, love is eternal.* "Knowledge vanishes, troubles cease. II.—LOVE'S SUPREMACY OVER THE CHIEF

GRACES OF THE INWARD LIFE. What are they? Faith and Hope. They are not disparaged! They are abiding. But Love is their superior. Why? (a) Because they are for ourselves, love is for others. (b) It is the root of the other two. (c) Because neither in faith, nor in hope is entire fruition of heaven, but only in love. EDITOR.



Paul's Psalm of Love. (2) The Indispensableness of Love.

"THOUGH I SPEAK WITH THE TONGUES OF MEN AND OF ANGELS, AND HAVE NOT CHARITY, I AM BECOME AS SOUNDING BRASS, OR A TINKLING CYMBAL. AND THOUGH I HAVE THE GIFT OF PROPHECY, AND UNDERSTAND ALL MYSTERIES, AND ALL KNOWLEDGE; AND THOUGH I HAVE ALL FAITH, SO THAT I COULD REMOVE MOUNTAINS, AND HAVE NOT CHARITY, I AM NOTHING. AND THOUGH I BESTOW ALL MY GOODS TO FEED THE POOR, AND THOUGH I GIVE MY BODY TO BE BURNED, AND HAVE NOT CHARITY, IT PROFITETH ME NOTHING."—1 *Corinthians* xiii. 1-3.

THE apostle is here dwelling on a case—real or imaginary it might be, but since it concerns himself, his biography warrants us in saying it was imaginary, a pure hypothesis—in which there is much seeming virtue without love as its mainspring and life. He insists, in view of such a case, on *the Indispensableness of Love*. We gather I.—LOVE IS INDISPENSABLE, THOUGH MANY EXTERNAL VIRTUES MAY SEEM TO EXIST WITHOUT IT. There might be (a) *great gifts of speech*, "tongues of men and of angels"; (b) *great grasp of understanding*, "prophecy and knowledge"; (c) *great fulness of faith*, "all faith so as to remove mountains"; (d) *great almsgiving*, "bestow all my goods to feed the poor"; (e) *great martyr enthusiasm*, "give my body to be burned,"—yet with all this if a man has not love he is a spiritual "nothing," a moral "nobody," a nonentity in the great realm of being, where whosoever dwells in love dwells in God and God in him. II.—LOVE IS INDISPENSABLE BECAUSE IT INSPIRES, ENSURES, AND ENERGISES ALL SUCH VIRTUES. The virtues described are desirable. "Covet them." But they are only ensured by Love, and are certain to be found, and to be found in their fulness where Love is. It is

the true inspiration and energiser. Without Love such virtues are (a) *Mere sound*—a mere piece of metal which when struck will merely produce noise. (b) *Mere appearance*; “I am nothing”; there is the semblance of moral manhood, but only semblance. (c) *Mere abortive effort*; “it profiteth me nothing.” It is “labour in vain.” Whereas not one of these virtues but will in greater or less degree flourish where Love is. For Saint Augustine’s great saying, “Love and do what thou wilt,” is warranted by Holy Scripture, “Love is the fulfilling of the law.”

EDITOR.

Paul’s Psalm of Love. (3) The Features of Love.

“CHARITY SUFFERETH LONG, AND IS KIND; CHARITY ENVIETH NOT; CHARITY VAUNTETH NOT ITSELF, IS NOT PUFFED UP, DOTH NOT BEHAVE ITSELF UNSEEMLY, SEEKETH NOT HER OWN, IS NOT EASILY PROVOKED, THINKETH NO EVIL; REJOICETH NOT IN INIQUITY, BUT REJOICETH IN THE TRUTH; BEARETH ALL THINGS, BELIEVETH ALL THINGS, HOPETH ALL THINGS, ENDURETH ALL THINGS. CHARITY NEVER FAILETH.”—1 Cor. xiii. 4-8.

PAUL’S eye rests now on the glorious landscape of Love, Paul gazes now into the dear face of Love, and of the features of that landscape, of that face he sings to us in this Psalm. As we listen we learn I.—The features of Love are MANIFOLD. There are some landscapes that are almost tame; some faces not featureless but ordinary, features there, but not marked and vivid. Not so with Love. It is the landscape of Devonshire rather than Lincolnshire; of Switzerland rather than Holland. Read the description here—there is no monotony, eye bright, brow clear, lips strong and definite. II.—The features of Love are HARMONIOUS. (1) *There is the presence of all that could complete character.* Patience, kindness, joy, fortitude. “Strength and beauty are in the sanctuary.” There is the full diapason of the music of morals here. (2) *There is the absence of any element that could be disfigurement or discord.* “Envieth not, is not puffed up,” &c. III.—The features of love are all BEAUTIFUL. There is not one virtue in this description that is not like a splendid Corinthian column. Nothing deforms the landscape, nothing disfigures the face. Rather every element heightens the loveliness. There is not only a

wealth, but a wealth of the beauties of Love. IV.—The features of Love are PERMANENT. “The grass withers, the flowers fade;” even “the human face divine” grows old, the brow wrinkled, the eye dim, the mouth weak. The beauty of Love is imperishable. “Love never faileth.” The word *faileth* pictures either a flower whose petals never fall off, or an actor “who is never hissed off the stage, has its part to play on the stage of eternity.” This Psalm of Love describes not an abstract picture, but indeed and in truth the personal form of Love as it is in Jesus Christ. “God is Love.” Christ is “God manifest in the flesh,”—and, therefore, Incarnate Love. The way to Love is knowledge of The Christ, intercourse with The Christ, fellowship with The Christ, feeding on The Christ, following The Christ. He is the Way to Love, the Truth about Love, the Life of Love.

EDITOR.



Grieving the Holy Spirit.



“AND GRIEVE NOT THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD.”—*Eph.* iv. 30.



SACRED Scripture teaches that God is not impassive, but impressible. I.—IN WHAT WAYS MAY THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD BE GRIEVED? (a) *By denying His works.* (b) *By doubting His word.* (c) *By resisting His influences.* This may occur before conversion; when the soul becomes deeply impressed with Divine truth, is convinced of sin, and righteousness, and judgment, and yet holds back from a full surrender to Christ. It may occur after conversion; when the means of grace are neglected, prayer restrained, secret sins indulged in, backslidings allowed. If we misrepresent the religion of Jesus, become hypocritical and worldly, the Holy Spirit is grieved, our piety injured. II.—WHAT RESULTS ENSUE WHEN THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD IS GRIEVED? (a) *He will withhold His smile.* (b) *He will withdraw His presence.*

CLIFTON.

FREDERICK W. BROWN.



Selected Acorns from a Stalwart Oak.

ERNEST RENAN.

"The smallest living *acorn* is fit to be the parent of *oak-trees* without end."
—*Carlyle*.

CHILDLIKENESS AND RESTFULNESS.—"The brain parched by reasoning thirsts for simplicity, like the desert for spring water. . . . The candour of a child, unconscious of its own beauty and seeing God clear as the daylight, is the great revelation of the ideal."

WOMEN AND GOODNESS.—"When reflection has brought us to the last limit of doubt, the spontaneous affirmation of the good and the beautiful which is to be found in the female conscience delights us and settles the question for us. . . . This is why religion is preserved to the world by woman alone."

TRUTH UNFETTERED.—"The true has great power when it is free; the true endures; the false is ever changing and decays. Thus it is that the true always rises to the surface and in the end prevails."

LIFE AND DUTY.—"I still believe that life is the most frivolous of things unless it is regarded as one great and constant duty. . . . Life is only of value by devotion to what is true and good. The aim of a life worth living should be ideal and unselfish."

POLITICS AND PRAYER.—"When the student had finished reading the extract from the debate, the old superior (M. Duclaux) said, 'It is very clear, my lad, that these men do not say their orisons.' . . . What a light is let in upon many points by the fact that M. Clémenceau does not probably say his orisons."

FERTILITY OF FAITH.—"I know what faith is—the experience derived from the days of old is very precious to me. I feel that in reality my existence is still governed by a faith which I no longer possess, for one of the peculiarities of faith is that *its action does not cease with its disappearance*. . . . After Orpheus, when he had lost his ideal, was torn to pieces by the Thracian women, his lyre still repeated Eurydice's name."

TRIFLING WITH TRUTH.—"No *attenuation of the dogmas* of Scripture was allowed at St. Sulpice. . . . They never thought that the dogma had any need to be toned down, veiled, or dressed up to suit the taste of modern France. . . . The conversions of this kind do not make Christians. . . . There is nothing so mischievous as the vague; it is even worse than what is false."

SELF-ANNIHILATION.—"He felt that he had been highly gifted in an infinite capacity for loving, and then he set to work, in a sort of blind fury, *to annihilate himself*. It seemed as if he discerned Satan in those graces which God had so liberally bestowed upon him. . . . He was like a shell within which a puny evil genius was ever busy in crushing the inner pearl."

THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE, BRISTOL.

T. BROUGHTON KNIGHT.

Pulpit Handmaids.

THE MINISTERS' SEASIDE HOME, MORTHOE, NORTH DEVON.

As the Editor of *The Homilist* is the Founder and Warden of the Ministers' Seaside Home, and as in each enterprise he is seeking to be of practical service to his brethren in the Ministry of all Christian Communion, it may not be inappropriate if some short sketch of the purposes and achievements of the kindred effort finds a place in these pages.

THE AIM.

The aim of the Ministers' Seaside Home at Morthoe, which was the first of its kind to be established, is to afford to Ministers and their wives, of all Communion, specially to those whose incomes are limited, or whose family claims are large, opportunity for renewal of health after illness, or for recreation of tone and strength after a spell of hard work, or anxiety and worry, that is more trying than work. Others, whose incomes would not be a reason for entering at the lower rate of payment, are welcomed, when there is room, on contributing their full cost. In every case the Minister assesses himself according to a scale which is sent by the Warden to the intending visitor. All are equal as guests. The Home is to be, in no sense, regarded either by donors or guests as a charity, but as a grateful recognition of the services which true Ministers render to the community at large.

Besides providing thoroughly comfortable accommodation and ample board, in a beautiful and invigorating locality; one of the happiest results of the Home is, securing bright, sympathetic, and as it is continually found, religiously inspiring companionship for the Ministers and their wives who comprise the domestic circle thus formed, in which circle the home feeling has hitherto been most happily prevalent. Not a slight advantage is that this "home feeling" has been keenly enjoyed by guests belonging to the Brethren, the Baptists, the Church of England, the Congregationalists, the Methodists, and the Moravians. The catholicity of the

fraternal companionship has been, according to many testimonies, a very great joy to men of all Churches. With renewed health and refreshed spirits there has also been an enlargement of heart which will survive even the other gains.

HAS THE AIM BEEN REALISED?

There is present accommodation for twelve guests, an extra wing could easily be added to the house (for which indeed a capital design has been furnished) with provision for at least double as many, while the garden produce of vegetables and fruit would be ample. In the height of the summer season, scores are unable to gain admission, whilst almost all the year round some guests find it a healthful, a restful, and an invigorating home. So nearly six hundred from almost every county in England and Wales have already said. Some of their words (written to the Warden who receives all applications, and superintends the management) are as follows :—

A *Nottinghamshire* Minister recovering from long and serious nervous illness, and asking for extension of his visit, writes :—

“I am afraid you will say that my gratitude for the past is but ‘a lively sense of favours to come ;’ this, however, is a sin which may be pardoned in those who know what Morthoe is. To me it is simply perfection as a ‘quiet resting place,’ and I think my brain is stronger by a long way for the coming here.”

A Minister from *Gloucestershire* says :—

“The change has done me much good, and I feel like a new man in mind and body.”

The letter of a Missionary on furlough from *India* says :—

“I was very much pleased with the arrangements. I had often wished that such a thing might be. It is a real boon. The house was in beautiful order, and everything as nice as it could be.”

A Minister from near *London* speaks of his visit as an

“Exceedingly happy and cheap little outing to Morthoe. It has been an increasing fund of pleasant conversation—one of the brightest, jolliest little trips I have ever had. You don’t know how much good you are doing in it. Not merely for pocket and health of good brethren, but for their spirits, for cheerfulness, cultivation of geniality, letting us know one

another, making and cementing friendships, and, in a word, hastening on the great time of universal love. But is not that the case with every good and generous action? it accomplishes more than was intended."

A *Leicestershire* Minister writes :—

"It is almost impossible to exaggerate the suitability of the 'Home' as a place of rest for Ministers, or its claim on the Christian public for support. The whole tone of the place is that of a refined religious home. I certainly say that with climate so invigorating, and amid scenery so grand and inspiring as that of Morthoe and its neighbourhood, with company so genial, sympathetic, and stimulating, and with a table so excellent, varied, and abundant, *The Grange* is the very place for brethren to recruit their physical, mental, and spiritual power."

The following letter, signed by ten guests staying at one time at *The Grange*, was thankfully received by the Warden :—

"The air is invigorating, the scenery grand; and we are helped to enjoy all this the more because, though away from home, we have the comforts of home. More than once we have said to each other that we owe all this to your kindly thoughts and self-sacrificing efforts on behalf of your brethren, and we feel that we should be guilty of a grievous omission if we did not tell you how much we feel indebted to you. Accept, then, our hearty thanks to you and the friends who have helped you in this good work."

From *Essex* a Minister writes :—

"I never enjoyed anything more in my life, and have returned feeling well for my winter's work. I very much appreciate the cleanliness and comfort of the house; and the quietness and regularity with which everything is done is beyond praise."

A *Staffordshire* Minister says :—

"I sincerely thank you, and the friends who co-operate with you, for the happiest and most restorative holiday I have yet had."

WHERE IS THE HOME?

The Grange, as the house is called, is situated two miles distant from the Morthoe Station of the L. and S. W. R. The district is one of the wildest, grandest, and at the same time one of the healthiest of Devon-

shire. The waves break in upon its beach of savage rock and far-reaching sands with what Charles Kingsley, writing of this shore, calls—

“The everlasting thunder of the long Atlantic swell.”

Above these rocks are hills piled on hills, stretching away in all directions for many miles, and covered with rich grass and golden gorse and purple heather. The house stands in three acres of undulating land, part of which is laid out with hardy shrubs, and with flowers in great profusion, and part with a large variety of vegetables and fruit.

Ilfracombe is four miles distant by rail, or may be reached by several picturesque walks. Dr. Slade King, one of the leading medical men of that town, most generously gives his gratuitous advice to any of the ministerial guests.

HOW IS IT SUSTAINED?

The House and Grounds (which are Freehold), and whatever Fund there is in hand, is invested in twenty Trustees, who belong to the Baptist, the Church of England, and the Congregationalist Communions, who meet annually to receive the Warden's report, and the audited account of the Treasurer. Donors have given sums of £100 or less; Bazaars were held in Bristol and Ilfracombe, realising nearly £1000. Of these sums, after paying for purchase of the property and furniture, £600 is invested by the Trustees, the interest being applied towards the annual expenditure. Several friends of Ministers are annual subscribers, one such, the friend of the Founder and a member of his Church, being generously responsible for an annual subscription list of £100 a year. The balance on the accounts of the Home this year is on the wrong side.

The Founder is intensely anxious to interest liberal friends whose own holidays cost them much and yield them much. If such would but give to this enterprise (which for many a year may help scores of ministers and their wives to enjoy a holiday) as much as they spend on one autumn trip of their own, enough would soon be received (1) for an adequate investment, (2) for enlargement of the building.

Donations then are asked by one whose plea is “for my brethren and companions' sake,” and who is, therefore, not afraid to plead urgently and pressingly. Is it not worth while, kind reader, to make some sacrifice in order to give a gift by which many an overwrought servant of God shall have his health recruited, his nerves restrung, his whole nature refreshed?

Who can tell how many a Minister and Minister's wife will bless God through the next fifty years for any effort of yours that enlarges, or even tends to sustain, this Home? Besides gifts of money, donations of thoroughly good books to add to the present library, which is already indebted to some very thoughtful and wise donors, or really artistic pictures to take their places on the walls beside some masterpieces that have already been given, would be very welcome.

Annual Subscriptions, too, of a guinea and upwards would be much appreciated.

While the remembrance of this institution in bequeathing *legacies*, would be one means of ensuring the perpetuity of its usefulness.

Will Ministerial readers of this, who can afford it, do, as not a few have done, send some gift that may ensure the same sort of holiday for their brethren that annually they set such store on for fitting them anew for their own work.

And will all Ministers to whom these words come, plead delicately, but earnestly, with generous-hearted friends in their own congregations.

Thus not only will the endeavours of the Founder and others who have co-operated with him, be followed by helpful efforts, but will easily be exceeded and eclipsed by achievements that will be stronger and more full of blessing to those about whom Christ will one day say, "Inasmuch as ye have done it to the least of these, My brethren, ye have done it unto Me."

THE PRESENT TRUSTEES ARE—

Rev. Urijah R. Thomas (Secretary), Bristol. J. Bartlett, Esq. (Treasurer), Bristol. Walter Derham, M.A., Westbury. Wilberforce N. Tribe, Bristol. P. F. Sparke Evans, J.P., Clifton. Rev. David Thomas, D.D., London. Rev. F. W. Gotch, LL.D., Bristol. Rev. Richard Glover, Bristol. Edward Robinson, Esq., Bristol. Frank N. Tribe, Esq., Bristol. Rev. W. Clarkson, B.A., Bristol. Rev. S. March, B.A., Worcester. Rev. F. Hastings, London. G. A. Wills, Esq., Bristol. Samuel Day Wills, J.P., Bristol. Rev. H. Arnold Thomas, M.A., Bristol. Rev. E. G. Gange, Bristol. Channing Pearce, M.D., London. Rev. C. B. Symes, B.A., London.

EDITOR.

Reviews.

THE MESSAGES TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES OF ASIA MINOR. By CANON TAIT. London: Hodder and Stoughton, Paternoster Row.

The words of Christ confessedly transcend in intrinsic worth and force all the words that the greatest men of any land or age ever uttered. The words, after He had left the world and had been in the pure heavens of eternity, are, for many reasons, the most valuable. Many expositions of His words to the Seven Congregations of Asia Minor, have from time to time appeared, but the work before us is in worth equal to the best and superior to most. The author avails himself of the light of previous exegetes, such as Trench, Wardlaw, Plumptre, Liddon, &c. We think, however, that the work would have lost nothing and gained much had it been more condensed in style and less conventionally evangelizing. There is rather too much of the popular pulpit about it. This, however, in the estimation of some, would heighten its worth. The author eschews all modern speculations and theories of unfulfilled prophecies,—the things that are to come. He furnishes a scholarly exposition of each verse, and urges its practical meaning on the attention of his readers. He reveals varied and extensive reading, much cogent reasoning and literary taste and skill.

LUTHER AND THE LEADERS OF THE REFORMATION. By DR. TULLOCH. Third Edition. London and Edinburgh: Blackwood and Sons.

The lives of truly great men are not only the most charming, but the most significant and soul-quickenings subjects of meditation. They live after their death and, like the bones of Elisha, touch the dead into life. Dead minds on earth are constantly deriving life from contact with the spiritual remains of the holy dead. All the true thoughts that have ever been spoken, and all the true virtues that have ever been acted on this earth by all the good men that are gone, are here now in some form or other. When a man speaks a thought to the world he can never call it back, it originates a series of operations that will never end; in some form or other it will be working in the mind of the world ages after the tongue that spoke it, or the ear that heard it shall have crumbled to dust. It is so also when a man exhibits a virtue before the eye of others; the impression he makes upon the spectator no time will obliterate. Thus the good man rears a monument in the soul of others more lasting far than

the huge pyramids of the Nile. Our age is full and rich with such remains of the dead. We are, however, far enough from regarding the men here sketched, Luther, Calvin, Latimer, and Knox, as either correct in their theology, or perfect in their character. They stand far enough away from the grand ideal. None of them were thoroughly Christly, either in character or doctrine, but inasmuch as each had independent convictions—which in all ages have been a very rare attainment—and each had the courage of his convictions—which is also a rare and priceless merit,—and each awoke the world to new and high thoughts, the life of each was transcendently valuable.

This volume requires no recommendation from us. The well-known ability of the accomplished author, and the fact that it is in the third edition, would stamp any recommendation as an impertinence.

GREEK TESTAMENT CONCORDANCE. By ROBERT YOUNG, LL.D. Edinburgh: J. Young and Co.

Some time ago we had the gratification of calling our readers' attention to the author's matchless Analytical Concordance. In this volume we have exhibited every root and derivative, with prefixes and terminations in all their occurrences: together with a Concordance and Dictionary of Bible words and synonyms: and a concise Concordance to eight thousand changes of the Revised Testament; also the Hebrew renderings of the Lexicon. Surely it is only necessary to announce such a work as this to preachers, to stimulate them to procure it at once.

GEORGE BIRKBECK, THE PIONEER OF POPULAR EDUCATION. By J. G. GODARD. London: Bemrose and Son, 23, Old Bailey.

We are right glad to receive a biographic sketch of Dr. Birkbeck, one of the most able, accomplished, and useful men of this century. He was the founder of "Mechanics' Institutions," which have not only spread over England, Wales, and Scotland, but over our colonies and the United States. He also may be considered the father of the London University and other great institutions. It was he that, in the dark and barren desert of English ignorance, opened up the fountain of knowledge for the working and the humbler classes—and all this against terrible opposition, the opposition of the House of Lords, the large land-owners, and the Church of England. All honour to Lord Brougham, Bishop Thirlwall, Dudley Stewart, Sydney Smith, and Joseph Hume, and such men who joined him

and helped him. How contemptible our rulers, and conventionally great men, and even our ecclesiastics appear here in their efforts to prevent the spread of general knowledge. They have gone to their graves and their names are all but forgotten, thwarted by Dr. Birkbeck, whose name will live on, and whose solitary influence will spread through all future time. We would have all young men procure this book and read it, it will show them what men they should really value and emulate in passing through life. The educators are the true patriots and benefactors of the race.

Publications of Messrs. T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh.

THE LIFE OF CHRIST. By DR. BERNHARD WEISS. Vol. III.

THE DOCTRINE OF DIVINE LOVE. By ERNEST SARTORIUS.

THE LIFE OF ST. PAUL. By REV. J. STALKER, M.A.

A SHORT HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN MISSIONS. By GEORGE SMITH, LL.D.

THE LIFE OF CHRIST.—We have twice before called the attention of our readers to this Life of Christ, by Dr. Weiss. This third volume concludes the work. It touches on thirty-six subjects connected with the Life of Christ. Amongst these subjects are a "Demand for a Sign; From Capernaum to Nazareth; Journey through the Land of the Gentiles; The Day at Cæsarea Philippi; Announcement of the Passion; Hope of Jesus' Second Coming; The Mount of Transfiguration; The Dispute as to Precedence; The Discourse on Offences; The Departure from Galilee; Rupture with the Capital; Rest after Conflict; The Road to Death; Israel and the Gentiles; The Invocations of Woe; Prognostications; The Fatal Passover; The Betrayal; Before the Sanhedrim," &c., &c. Much as we value other works on the same subjects, such as Andrews, Farrar, Geikie, we value this also. It looks at many subjects from a new standpoint, and suggests new trains of thought. It is a thorough work, brimful of thoughtfulness.

THE DOCTRINE OF DIVINE LOVE.—This work treats of the grandest theme, Divine Love. It first appeared in 1840, and the distinguished author has been in his eternal rest for a quarter of a century. Its fundamental ideas are love the primal source of all good; its contrast, selfishness the source of all evil; and self-denial, the conquest of this evil and the renewal of the bond of love between God and man. What a field is thus opened up, affluent in spiritual beauty and fruitfulness! The book is most original, and abounds with lofty thoughts and grand expressions.

LIFE OF ST. PAUL.—This little volume is one of the series of Bible Handbooks. The subjects treated are—"Paul's place in History; His Unconscious Preparation for the Work; His Conversion; His Gospel; The Work awaiting the Worker; His Missionary Travels; His Writings and His Character; Picture of a Pauline Church; His Great Controversy; The End; Hints to Teachers and Questions for Pupils." This work is not only fraught with great interest, but contains much valuable information.

HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN MISSIONS.—It would be impossible to read any history more full of inspiration of the highest kind than that of missions. Here, in a small compass, without any waste of words, we have a sketch of missions from Abraham down to Moffat, and an account of missionary operations from patriarchal down to modern times. The following statement will be read with interest:—"The latest statistics for 1882-3, most of which we have verified, enable us to be certain that the hundred Missionary Societies and Churches of Protestant Christendom—reckoning each which has a separate financial organisation, though there may be more than one in each Church—raise every year more than $2\frac{1}{4}$ millions sterling from all sources, or £2,275,000 in the following proportions: Great Britain, £1,530,000; America, £600,000; Continent of Europe, £145,000. These hundred organisations send out 2,900 ordained missionaries, or 3,120 altogether, including medical missionaries who have a full professional qualification. Including women missionaries and native preachers not ordained after a lengthened theological training, in the Presbyterian sense, we may accept the following figures as within the truth. They justify us in estimating the strength of the missionary host in the year of 1884, a century after the father of modern missions began his praying and preaching and writing for the conversion of the heathen, as 5,000 European and American, and 30,000 Asiatic, African, and Polynesian missionaries of Christ. *British* Society missionaries, 2,757; native helpers, 20,532; communicants, 352,196; scholars, 285,237. *American* missionaries, 1,395; native helpers, 6,498; communicants, 198,587; scholars, 80,395. *Continental* missionaries, 767; native helpers, 2,441; communicants, 71,794; scholars, 27,548."

A FRIENDLY LETTER, Addressed to Ministers, Missionaries, and all Labourers for the Lord. London: Jarrold and Sons, Paternoster Buildings.

This little missive is number six of a "Friendly Letter Series," and is certainly, whatever the others may be, just the one of the series to which

the attention of our readers may well be called. With a good deal of artless simplicity, yet with very decided intelligence, this letter-writer bids those he describes in his title observe very carefully the studious and devoted minister whom a working man went to hear in a Mission, because, said he, "I will go to hear the Parson who has a light in his window." Then utilising the figure of the lamp, the writer proceeds to show what cobwebs often obscure ministerial light, naming four,—Unreality, Insincerity, Want of personal holiness, and which to us seems in these days as thick and hideous, and alas, as common as any of them, Want of humility. We wish this Letter a wide circulation, and an attentive perusal.

THE DUTY OF GOVERNMENTS, by the Venerable Archdeacon FARRAR, D.D., F.R.S. Price One Penny. The National Publication Dépôt, 337, Strand, London.

This manful Sermon might well be scattered broadcast on the mind and heart of the nation. Its sympathies, its courage, its definiteness, its practicalness make it a worthy utterance of an English Christian Prophet who has as truly a divine message for the men of his time and country as Hosea, or Amos, or Malachi ever had. Very solemn are such warnings as this, "Other nations and other empires have fallen, each in turn undermined by their own sins, or blasted by their own ambition. They have been choked in blood, or unmanned by lasciviousness, or clogged with greed; and is England safe except by her faithfulness to eternal moral law?"

THE SALVATION ARMY *in relation* to the CHURCH AND STATE, and other Addresses Delivered at Cannon Street Hotel, City. By Mrs. BOOTH. London: S. W. Partridge, 9, Paternoster Row.

We have often been amused at the impertinence with which not only individuals, but Conferences, and Assemblies, and Unions have arrogated to themselves a special right to arraign and judge the proceedings of the Salvation Army, an impertinence that would be realised if the Salvation Army arraigned and passed solemn judgments on the Church of England, the Wesleyan Conference, or the Baptist or Congregational Union. That all Christian men should be awakened to enquiring interest about this great religious movement is another and a better thing. For such enquirers this book, for which we are greatly indebted to the able and devoted author, is invaluable. Here is the best that can be said, remark-

ably well said by one whose genius and character and devotion are a God-given fortune to the enterprise. Whether we read her pages or listen to her impressive tones we are led to think of Mrs. Booth as a sort of Deborah of our land and times.

IDYLS OF LABOUR. By JOHN GREGORY. London: Simpkin Marshall and Co.

Again and again the Toiler has been the Poet, the Mechanic and the Muse have been one. Nor is this a thing of wonder. For the Poet needs to know, as the true workman ever does, what is the practical meaning of the life with whose mere seemings the indolent are content. Here are the Songs of a Son of Toil. They are every one of them healthy and strong. Many also of them are sweet and tender. Most of them are tuneful in rhythm as well as thought. They are full of a true Poet's love of nature in its manifold aspects, of man in his rights and wrongs, his joys, sorrows, shames, and nobilities, and of God, the God about whom the true Poet is, by inner compulsion, ever constrained to sing. "The St. Agnes' Workmans' Club," who are responsible for the publication in this form of their fellow member's poems, have shown at once a true discernment and a chivalrous pride. They think it will be a service to many to learn "what are the thoughts of a genuine Working Man and of many of his class." We should like to quote freely from this little book, but would rather persuade our readers to purchase it, so that as a literary venture it may be a complete success. The first and last verses of a piece—of sixteen verses—called "New Year's Musings," run thus :—

"Praise God from whom all blessings spring,
Another year is born ; and now
To Love or Self, which shall we bow—
Which of the twain shall be our king ?

"Do good, and break Self's iron rod ;
Then shall this orb, with sweeter charms,
Be circled in a seraph's arms,
And Love shall bear us up to God."



The

Leading Homily.

CONFORMITY TO THE WORLD.

“BE NOT CONFORMED TO THIS WORLD.”—*Romans* xii. 2.



THE reader of Scripture is familiar with the sharp contrast it everywhere holds up between “*this world*” and that other world which it is its main purpose to make known, for which it is its main object to prepare. It is carefully pointed out, men are incessantly warned, that “*this world*” is in every respect the reverse of what they ought to set their hearts upon: that it is the one thing they are most studiously to avoid. The apostle of the Gentiles, for example, writing to the Ephesian Christians, and drawing their attention to their present spiritual walk and conversation as contrasted with what they were before they believed, reminds them that “they then walked according to the course of ‘*this world*.’” Speaking again of the naturally darkened intellect of man as contrasted with its condition when “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God” shines in upon it, he calls the former at its very best the wisdom of “*this world*.” Warning his readers yet again of the evil power that raiseth itself up against God and good, he designates him as the “god of ‘*this world*.’” And not only from apostles do we have the contrast set before us: it is as sharply defined by our Lord Himself. To the unbelieving

Jews He speaks in language like this: "Ye are of '*this world*,'" "I am not of '*this world*.'" He warns His disciples that because they are not of "*this world*," therefore the world hateth them: He admonishes the multitudes who came to listen to His teaching that the cares of "*this world*" choke the good seed! From every lip the same absolute distinction, from master and servant the same complete condemnation, from every page the command, "be not conformed to *this world*."

There must be something of peculiar importance here, something which men are very apt to forget, something of which they need ever and again to be put in mind! If the inspired writers, if our Saviour Himself in His teaching gave it such prominence, it cannot but be that it was intended to have equal prominence in every age, that the warning is not for long to be kept out of hearing, or the contrast for long to be kept out of sight: "*Be not conformed to this world*."

In the spirit of these remarks, and following up what I have just been saying, I wish to draw your attention for a little to these three things: the nature, the causes, and the cure of conformity to "*this world*."

First: To begin with, let us enquire what is meant by "*this world*": from this we shall the more easily perceive what it is to be conformed to it. Well, by "*this world*" is meant everything in it which is antagonistic to the truth, to the spirituality of religion, or to the life of God in the soul of man. You can come pretty nearly to a correct estimate of a man's character, the spirit he is of, if you can get at his prevailing mood, if you can discover the principles or maxims by which he is ruled, if you can see his daily walk and conversation: in the same way you can come pretty nearly to a correct estimation of the spirit of "*this world*": get to know its maxims and its practices: read its every-day life in the light of these, and you will have no difficulty in understanding "*this world*." Here are some of its maxims: "Every man for himself;" "quietness is best;" "honesty is the best policy." "*Every man for himself*:" there is the selfishness that draws in everything to itself, the grasping greediness that with avaricious clutch keeps firm grip of all it has, though

the needy be perishing all around ! “ Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others ? ” No ! every man for himself ! I shall take as much as I can for as little as I can do : I shall give as little as I can for as much as I can get : “ it is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer, but when he is gone his way, then he boasteth. ” “ *Quietness is best* : ” there is the cowardice, the selfish prudence of the world which will not stand forth and speak a word for God or man, lest trouble should come upon it ! Quietness is best, and the unjustly accused is allowed to lie under the unjust accusation because to speak out might incur the wrath of the accuser : quietness is best, and the unpalatable truth that yet might have benefitted generations remains unuttered : quietness is best, and the rebuke that might have saved a man’s soul is withheld for fear of offence ! *Honesty is the best policy* : it sounds better than the others : is it really any better ? Suppose dishonesty had been the best policy : suppose that in the long run it had added to the wealth and would never be found out : what then ? Why the man who is honest just because it is the best policy would for the same reason have been dishonest ! A man who is religious just because his religion will help to make him rich or respectable is not a religious man : a man who is benevolent just because it will give him a good name among men is not benevolent ; and a man who is honest just because it is the best policy is not honest : make it safe and he’ll be dishonest to-morrow ! You must be honest for honesty’s sake, not for policy’s sake ; for God’s sake and not for your own ! These, and such as these, I might have named many more, are the maxims and principles which show the spirit of “ *this world*, ” and merely to mention them tells what it is to be conformed to it. Conformity to this world means that principles such as these, and practices founded upon them, are the atmosphere in which the life is lived and has its being : in a word, it is living just as wicked, unregenerate men live, acting according to the unchanged principles of fallen humanity, thinking, feeling, living a selfish, godless life.

Not that there may not be very great differences among men in respect of this conformity : there may be, and there are, very

great differences indeed ! “ In one case, an individual possessed of strong appetites and passions, destitute of the restraints of education, and so situated that he may readily find the full indulgence of his low propensities, becomes an absolute monster of impiety, sensuality, and sin : in another, a man endowed with a more happily constituted bodily and mental frame, and with the additional advantages of intellectual culture and moral restraint, becomes an amiable, useful, respectable member of society : yet in both of them there may be equally conformity to this world : in both of them the character is of the earth, earthy ; they live not for God but for themselves : they live for what they see.”

Conformity to this world is doing as the world does, guided by its principles, following its practices ; living according to the course of “ *this world*.”

Second : The causes of this conformity. And here I do not mean to speak of its first and great cause, that original innate evil propensity which belongs to man, and according to which he gravitates, as by the action of some all-controlling law, down to conformity to its own likeness, the worldliness already in the human heart which makes it seek its own. I assume this, we are all by nature worldly, and prone to worldliness, and this is the great cause of conformity to the world, and this great cause must be removed, destroyed in the one and only way, by the incoming of the stronger than the strong man ! But there are other causes, secondary and subordinate, which have their own part in accelerating this evil tendency, and it may be for the good of some of us to have them exposed.

1. Perhaps the most common of these is the predisposition, the proclivity to imitate in our lives the actions of other lives ; more plainly *to do as other people do*. Without any thought about it, without being aware we are doing it, we are continually doing as other people do, following their lead, making ourselves their shadows ! Very well for children, not very well for grown-up men, who ought to have come into the conscious possession of their own personality ; who ought to know themselves to be endowed with reason and will ; reason, for the very end of finding

out each one for himself what it is right for him to do; will, to determine to do that right, altogether irrespective of what another may have found out to be right for him! A child may, without blame, do what it sees others do; may a man do this without blame? Children may flock together in companies; should not men stand alone? And if men shall flock together in companies, should not each of them be able to render a reason why?

Without pronouncing judgment upon some of the scenes of amusement where many who have come to years of discretion may oftentimes be found,—the theatre, or the drinking saloon: ask those frequenters of them how many of them are there because they have deliberately made up their minds that this is the place for them; how many just because their companions went; don't you think that the latter would far outnumber the former: that for one who would tell you he was here because he chose to be here, the multitude would have to reply, "We are here, well, because others are here!" And it will not do to try to turn the edge of this by saying that they go because they get the pleasure they like, for just let respectable society withhold its countenance from these scenes, let it be *not the thing* to be seen there, and would these places be so thronged as they are now? Nay! What fills them then? Why, that everybody goes there, and of course the number of men is a large one who must do as everybody does!

Now, without pronouncing judgment upon these things (surely it is not necessary!), is it worthy of a man, made in the image of God, endowed with reason, conscience, will, possessed of the power of calling himself to account for all that he does, capable of choosing a path for himself and of walking in it, is it worthy of him when asked to render a reason for some course of conduct to have no other reply but this, "I went because my companions went: I would not have gone if they had not: I followed them." Where is the man's independence? Where is his individualising will? Where is the crown that God placed upon his brow, the freedom of choice, in virtue of which he had it in his own hands to turn from the paths that others trod in to follow in his own? His independence is in the dust, his will is a pliant reed, his free-

dom is sold into bondage, he has bound himself with chains, and the miserable comfort he has to give himself but deepens, if he would but think of it, his misery, that he is one of many who have done the same!

2. Another cause of conformity, of gravitating to the world, is sinful amiability—the fear of giving offence. There are people who are so dependent upon the good opinion of the people they live among, that to gain their good opinion they will forfeit their own respect by doing those things which, but for their neighbours, they would have left undone. They have interests of their own they would like to pursue, but they are laughed or frowned out of them by those who live near them; they have opinions of their own, but if in giving expression to them they should detect the signs of opposition or disapproval, they falter, modify, explain them away! Because of the fear of men, which in this case certainly bringeth a snare, they are all their lifetime subject to bondage, colourless reflections of other men!

Consider what effect this fear of giving offence will have in making those men conform to the world who, unhappily for themselves, are cast among those who live according to the spirit of the world. Let it be a well-to-do, respectable family, settling down among careless living neighbours; a clerk in a counting-house where others are godless; a workman among reckless, wicked men. What a hard thing to resist all this! What an easy prey for the spirit of this world! With principles unstable, with the heart unguarded, with an amiable desire to please, how soon do they begin to do things they know to be wrong, keep silence when they ought to speak out, pretend to approve while they silently condemn, till seduced by the desire to please, principle honeycombed, and the sense of right stifled, they sink down into "*this world*" beside those who have been the occasion, but not the cause of their moral and spiritual ruin. Many a man may date his destruction from the day he went down to breathe the spirit of the world because, most infatuate of all infatuations, he was afraid of losing the good opinion of bad men!

3. One other cause, or another aspect of this cause of conformity to "*this world*" is, the inability of many to stand alone

in what they believe to be right, whose first question when any doctrine is urged upon their acceptance is this, "Have any of the rulers believed in it?" When any public question is debated, "What side have the respectable people taken?" When a side must be taken, "Which is likely to win?" There are many such; who has not met them? And because there are many such the world is continually gaining the day! Suppose a case, the case of opposition between a policy of sinful expediency and a policy of strict principle, where a slight divergence from strict principle, a slight giving in to the men of expediency and compromise would carry some measure unanimously! The "expediency" men are many; the "principle" men are few; this man believes that principle has the right of it, but then expediency has the numbers: may principle trust to his support? No, he cannot breathe the air of minorities, he must always be on the winning side! And so he conforms to this world, to this world which is too strong for him, and conforming against the remonstrances of his own better nature he becomes morally lowered, spiritually weakened, open to the next assault the world may choose to make upon him! Doing what others do; fear of giving offence; these causes of conformity to the world have slain their thousands: this one, the fear of standing alone, has slain its tens of thousands!

Of course I have all along implied the operation of a special cause of this conformity to the world, which gives to these I have just been dwelling upon their destructive force. It is not a wrong thing in itself to do some things our neighbours do, or to wish to please them, or to wish to stand well in their opinion; the wrong comes in when we do wrong things because our neighbours do them, when to please them we do wrong, when to get their countenance we sacrifice principle and truth: and it comes in by that tendency to wrong-doing which already exists in our own hearts, the fatal facility to evil which our own corrupt nature encourages, the traitorous correspondence between sin inside and the allurements to sin outside. Were the evil thing cast wholly out of a man, were the remains of sin utterly destroyed, were holiness the only ruling and remaining power, he would not

need the warning of the text. As his Master did, so would he pass through the world harmless and unharmed. The prince of this world would come to him, but he would find nothing in him. He would imitate only that which was good, he would never do evil for fear of man, he would stand alone against the world! But there is none such; "there is none righteous, no not one." We have traitors within our gates who secretly sympathise with the enemy without, and when that enemy tempts the traitor with a large enough bribe, the gates are secretly unbarred and we go down and conform to the world! Ay, the secret lies here, we love the world and the things of the world, we know we should not have them and yet we hanker after them; it is because we hold open communications with them, we get tidings of the allurements and we wish to be allured! The great first cause of conformity to the world, which gives to these others their power to hurt and destroy, is our secret sympathy with it, our secret liking for it.

Third: A few words in conclusion on the cure for this conformity; on the helps to the obedience of the injunction, "Be not conformed to this world."

1. And keeping to the line I have already followed, let me say that one great help in this direction is the realising of our own personality and responsibility, refusing to live in the crowd, resolving that by God's grace we shall live the life He calls upon us to live. Our Creator has bestowed upon each of us His own distinct individuality; He has thereby separated us each from the other, and so devolves upon us the duty and responsibility of living our own life, forming our own character, working out our own ends. However much we may live in society, our essential life is a lonely one, the nearest but touches us as one circle touches another, at one part; and for this reason that we are individuals, personal, separate existences, this here, to be this for ever!

Do we sufficiently realise this great endowment, the nobility, the grandeur of it, how it raises us above all visible and material things? And shall we make this personality the mere bond-slave of the spirit of the world? Shall we allow it, like aimless

drift-weed, to be driven, like other drift-weed, before the storm? Shall we follow the multitude to do evil? Shall we offend our best nature and our best friend for the smile of any human countenance? Shall we trample on the truth that we may be absorbed in the majority? Not if we realised that we were men, and realising this, measured, weighed, tested everything for ourselves, courting none, fearing none, following none, living therefore above the world.

2. Another help to obeying the command, "be not conformed to the world," is the withdrawing of ourselves, as far as may be, from under the power of that tendency within us which prevails with us to disobey it. Sometimes it is of very little use to fight against the influences of one's moral surroundings, the inner as well as the outer moral surroundings; the best thing, the only thing for one to do is to get away from these surroundings, in plain words, to fill the mind, soul, heart, with thoughts, sentiments, affections, which shall neutralise the influence of these surroundings, and by-and-bye make one altogether indifferent to them. The simplest remedy for moral maladies is to lift the patient up higher, set him up to a loftier height, give him a purer atmosphere, a more bracing climate!

A young man is beginning to acquire a taste for low pursuits, for company he would not like you to know he frequents, for pleasures he is as yet half ashamed of himself for enjoying; how will you help him to get above them? Not surely by leaving him to fight it out with them on the level of the world! You must supplement this with the argument of the dignity of his manhood in Christ, which he ought to know was not bestowed upon him to defile in these unworthy ways; you must supplement this with a taste for high things, love of books, intellectual pleasures, the society of the pure and good; then the old hankering for what was low will die out, he will forget the past, or only remember it to hate it; you have built for him a city far up the mountain side, and the poisonous vapours are all left in the swamps below.

It is the same throughout. If we would not be conformed to the world, we must rise above the world, if we would not be like

it, we must keep away from it, and the way to do this is to fill the whole man, mind, soul, heart, intellect, will, with the thoughts, desires, affections, that overcome the world.

3. In these remarks I have been anticipating that one Divine help which the apostle goes on to particularise, and from which those others I have mentioned receive their beneficial influence: "be not conformed to the world but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." That is to say, in harmony with all Scripture teaching and with all human experience, acknowledge the need of and put yourselves under the dominion of that new power which, by its own inward working, will preserve you from the course of life which they pursue who make no such acknowledgment, who submit themselves to no such power. Under the influence of this power, by means of this renewed mind, you will study and recognise in every given position the Divine will in every circumstance, the duty of the situation you are placed in, whatever that situation may be, you will lift up your eyes and, like Christ Himself, you will see what your Father shows you to be done. Thus transformed, you will not be conformed: another model will be realised by you in your lives: the world will lose its hold and Christ will be all in all.

And so from those somewhat wide general remarks about conformity to the world, we are brought, as Christian illustration must ever bring us, to our needs as guilty and depraved sinners, our weakness to overcome in our own strength, and the supplies there are stored up for us in the gift of that Holy Spirit who inspires in us every good thought, and helps to every right action: that Holy Spirit whose aid everyone may have who seeks: "If ye being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?"

"Be ye not therefore conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."

GLASGOW.

PETER RUTHERFORD.

Germ of Thought.

The Model Philanthropist.

“WHO FOR (*instead of*) THE JOY THAT WAS SET BEFORE HIM
ENDURED THE CROSS, DESPISING THE SHAME, AND IS SET DOWN
AT THE RIGHT HAND OF THE THRONE OF GOD.”—*Hebrews* xii. 2.

TAKING these words as they stand, they seem to give a savour of *selfishness* to the work of Christ, and selfishness is the essence of all sin, and the curse of humanity. Was the “*joy set before Him*” His motive, or one of His motives, for His endurance of the Cross? If so, He acted on the same principle that a soldier who, for what he imagines glory, hazards his life, or the worldling who rises early and sits up late, denies himself of rest and pleasure in order to get gain. Surely if this were a motive of Christ, He is no longer a worthy example for human imitation. Disinterestedness is the essence of moral greatness. Convince me that the man whom I regard as the greatest hero in human history was actuated in His greatest sacrifices by personal motives, and He ceases to be my hero. He falls from his lofty pedestal, “the salt has lost its savour.” If it be said that *χαρά*, or the joy “that is here said to be set before our Lord” was the happiness He would experience in the salvation of mankind, the selfish motive still remains. He who seeks happiness as an end, whatever that happiness may be, cannot be said to be actuated by pure disinterestedness, and is, therefore, so far destitute of the soul of true greatness. But the history of Christ, as given by His biographers, reveals in every act and word nothing but self-sacrificing love. Not a single pulsation of personal motive throughout. We are assured that He “pleased not Himself,” that “He who was rich, for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might

become rich." And the "new commandment" is this, "Love one another as I have loved you," not as you loved one another, which is in all cases more or less selfishly, but as "I have loved you," with absolute disinterestedness. This is the law penetrating through all that is external, and reaching down to the deepest springs of the soul—a law, obedience to which is virtue, and there is no virtue otherwise—a law which all can understand. Christ Himself is the all-comprehensive, universally binding, manifestly intelligible, and incomparably potent Law for humanity, not merely the Law-giver but the Law itself.

The verse then, as it stands, agrees neither with the essence of virtue, the revealed character of Christ, nor the new commandment. Does the text then admit of any other interpretation? The word *avti*, here translated "for," is elsewhere translated, "*instead of, in behalf of, in opposition to.*"* Let the verse read thus, "*Instead of the joy set before Him,*" then the words present to us the "Model Philanthropist," and three facts concerning Him are to be considered.

I.—He VOLUNTARILY SURRENDERS IMMEASURABLE PERSONAL ADVANTAGES. Instead of the "*joy that was set before Him.*" How great was that! The world we live in is fraught with an exhaustless store, in endless varieties, of all the elements of enjoyment. One of our hymnists has moaned out in doleful strains, "Lord, what a wretched land is this which yields us no supply." Wretched forsooth! The whole beats out music in every strain, and streams out pleasure from every point in the heaven above and on the earth beneath. Conceive of a man organised in every part with tastes and faculties capable of a full participation in all the elements of joy above, within, and around him! PHYSICALLY He is so sound in every organ and limb as to be impervious to all ailments and sufferings. His palate so clean, keen, and fresh as to relish the taste of every fruit that grows. His ear capable of catching the melody of every sound that floats around Him. His eye so clear and piercing as to discern

* Matt. ii. 22 ; v. 38 ; xvii. 27 ; xx. 28. Mark x. 45. Luke xi. 11. John i. 16. Romans xii. 17. 1 Cor. xi. 15. 1 Thess. v. 15. Heb. xii. 2-16. James iv. 15. 1 Peter iii. 9.

the beauties that are found in every form and colour. His olfactory nerve luxuriating in all the delicious aromas that float in every breeze. His strength so great as to raise Him above the fear of the violence of man, or the wild forces of nature—a perfect physical man. SOCIALLY He is free from all those malign emotions that disturb the soul, and charged with all those benevolent sympathies that flow through the heavens of God. INTELLECTUALLY He is endowed with powers to pierce through all material phenomena, enter into those regions of eternal principles that shake and sway the universe, and thus revel in the “reason of things,” being too wise withal to make theoretical mistakes or form impracticable plans, and thus kept free from those disappointments which often break the hearts of men. MORALLY He is so perfect as to be absolutely free from all moral regrets of the past, forebodings of the future, and all collisions between passion and principle, conscience and intellect. RELIGIOUSLY so alive to the Supreme existence, that God fills up the horizon of His soul, feels Him in all, sees Him in all, worships Him in all. He sees the universe through Him, not Him through the universe; looks at nature through God, not at God through nature. VITALLY so charged with life in every part as to have no apprehension of death, the dread event which like a thunder-cloud throws an ever deepening shadow over the path of all men. What joy the world would yield to such a man as this! Now just such a man was Christ as He appears in the Gospels—a perfect man in every respect, one who could control the elements of nature, and had power to lay down His life and take it up again. In this world, then, what joy was “set before Him!” But this He *voluntarily* surrendered. No other man ever did, or could do, such a thing as this. There are men who call themselves philanthropists who give up nothing for their race, but gain much in wealth and position. But even the most genuine of philanthropists—those who have given up most—have ever felt that the surrender of all must come sooner or later. Sublimely otherwise with Christ, He need not have surrendered aught. This is philanthropy indeed!

Another fact which we have to consider concerning this "Model Philanthropist" is "He endured the cross, despising the shame," &c.

II.—His HEROIC CONDUCT IN OVERWHELMING TRIAL. "He endured the cross, despising the shame," &c. Here we have the greatest torture and ignominy.

First : What death more agonizing than that of the cross ! The victim was stretched on a transverse beam, fastened to it by rugged nails through each foot and hand, centres of the tenderest nerves of existence. This cross on which He is thus nailed is raised high to a perpendicular position, and then let down into a deep cavity in the earth with a tremendous shock, there suspended under the burning beams of day, and the chilly winds of night, exposed to the stinging insects that crowd the air, with every nerve quivering and writhing with unspeakable anguish, until the whole tide of life slowly ebbs away. Death by drowning, suffocation, poison has no suffering half so excruciating, or prolonged as this ! The blow of the "king of terrors" often falls without inflicting much, if any pain, and does its work at once. Not so with the work of crucifixion. Now, it is here said that this "Model Philanthropist" *endured* the cross—endured it not only without resistance, but without murmur or complaint. He does not shriek vengeance at His enemies, but looks down upon their savage and fiendish faces with unutterable compassion, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." Nor does He utter a sentence of complaint against him under whose iron government He is thus allowed to suffer. On the contrary, He acquiesces in the Divine will,—"*Not My will, but Thine be done,*" and devoutly resigns His spirit into His hands as into the hands of a loving and tender Father. Was there ever endurance so heroic as this ? Did the heavens ever look down upon a sublimer nobleness of soul ?

Secondly : What *death more ignominious than that of the cross !* It was the death of a malefactor. What the gallows is in England, the guillotine in France, the cross was in Judea in the time of Christ, a thing of loathing, abhorrence, and disgrace. The public mind had but one feeling in relation to it, and that was shame. Now, Christ despised this, dared and defied this

swelling, rolling passion in the public mind. What heroism is here ! The millions in every age are too small to despise public sentiment. They bow to it as blades of grass bow to the winds of heaven. In this respect they are also as the grass of the field. None but the truly great can stand against it, despise its character, and dare its power. So rampant has been the sycophancy of the race in every age that the public sentiment has made some of the meanest men of the world kings, before whom it shouted its loyalty, and the worst men heroes, at whose shrine it rang out its devotions. He who is so loyal to the eternal principles of right as so to apply God's standard of righteousness to every man's character, and thus discovers degradation on thrones, pauperism in mansions, and devilism in priests and churches, must feel it his duty to expose and denounce the wrong everywhere, whether in princes or peasants, in churches or markets, and thus to damn the morally damnable wherever found. But what invincible heroism is required for this ! It is to despise the shame which public sentiment attaches to all who oppose conventional greatness, morality and piety. The men who have despised this shame have met the martyrs' fate, and so they will again. Albeit, great is the man who would despise the shame ; and greatly will he be honoured by the generations yet to be.

Another fact which we have here concerning the "Model Philanthropist" is—

III.—He TRIUMPHANTLY REACHED THE LOFTIEST DESTINY. "And is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." This highly metaphorical language expresses two things :—

First : *Rest*. "Sitting down." After a struggle tremendous, and an agony excruciating, rest is reached. What is rest ? It is the rest of soul. It is the rest of an approving conscience which says "well done" to the man who has been actuated and controlled by a disinterested love, and to none other. No soul rest can possibly come to those whose life has been inspired by selfish and sordid motives. Selfishness has no composure ; it broods tempests, it is like the troubled sea, it generates those disturbing passions that battle like the stormy billows of the deep. Rest comes out of

love as sunlight out of the heavens. God Himself is peace because He is love. It is the rest of the assured protection of God. He who has acted in all things from disinterested impulses is freed from all those servile apprehensions of poverty, sufferings, or death, that agitate the soul. He takes no anxious thought for the morrow, because of the Fatherly Providence that is over him. He dreads no trials or dangers, because he knows that God is his "refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." However tempestuous the winds and raging the sea, sublimely calm and still are the waters that lie nearest to the sand. The soul most filled with love is nearest to God, and is most in repose. Blessed rest this; not the rest of insensibility, for the more loving the soul the more tender; nor the rest of inaction—for of all forces of the universe love is the most in action—it is the rest of the ever-moving planets, rolling in an ether that no storm can ruffle. Love is an indisturbable ether through which all holy spirits speed their way. Moreover the language expresses

Secondly: *Dignity*. "The right hand of the throne of God." Where is His right hand? Where is it not? Where is His throne? There is no spot in immensity where it is not. To be consciously near this "all-present Deity" is the most dignified of all positions. "In His presence is fulness of joy, at His right hand are pleasures for evermore." But this dignity comes of disinterested conduct, and no whence else. Selfishness is degradation. The dignity connected with a life of love, unselfish and self-sacrificing, is a dignity to which the consciences of all—good and bad throughout the universe—must render homage. All true saints are kings as well as priests.

CONCLUSION.—Learn to test all professed philanthropists by this sublime Model. It has been said that religion has become a trade, and churches and chapels have become shops. This, alas, is too true, but it is equally true that popular philanthropy is, to a great extent, a thing of trade. The spirit of the market is in it and inspires it, beats in its pulse and prompts its activities. Where there is not a voluntary surrender of personal advantages and an heroic endurance of the greatest sufferings for the good of others, there is no true philanthropy, it is simply an imposture,

however plausible in its eloquence, illustrious its patrons, and successful in alleviating the material ills of mankind.

Learn, moreover, to regulate your own conduct by this sublime Model. He is our example, to Him we should conform in all things, both in thought, spirit, and deed. *Christ*, not *creeds*, we should make the guide of our lives and the standard of our character. "If any man has not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His."

LONDON.

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.



Christ Raises the Dead Man at Nain.

"AND IT CAME TO PASS THE DAY AFTER, THAT HE WENT INTO A CITY CALLED NAIN ; AND MANY OF HIS DISCIPLES WENT WITH HIM, AND MUCH PEOPLE. NOW WHEN HE CAME NIGH TO THE GATE OF THE CITY, BEHOLD, THERE WAS A DEAD MAN CARRIED OUT, THE ONLY SON OF HIS MOTHER, AND SHE WAS A WIDOW : AND MUCH PEOPLE OF THE CITY WAS WITH HER. AND WHEN THE LORD SAW HER, HE HAD COMPASSION ON HER, AND SAID UNTO HER, WEEP NOT. AND HE CAME AND TOUCHED THE BIER : AND THEY THAT BARE HIM STOOD STILL. AND HE SAID, YOUNG MAN, I SAY UNTO THEE, ARISE. AND HE THAT WAS DEAD SAT UP, AND BEGAN TO SPEAK. AND HE DELIVERED HIM TO HIS MOTHER."—*Luke vii. 11-15.*

1. *Nain is an obscure town.* It has never been of any importance. As is the case with many a quiet little country town, there are no materials for a long history or a detailed description of it. To-day Nain is probably a less important place than it was in the days of our Lord. It is now but a village. Perhaps it was little more than a village then according to our modern notions. To those who love these Gospel stories however, there are two points of exceeding interest connected with unimportant obscure Nain (See Smith's Bible Dictionary). One is that the site of it is *certainly* known. The modern traveller may go to Nain and be quite sure that he is going to the very place that Jesus knew. And, moreover, there is no

doubt as to the approach by which our Saviour was coming to the little town when He met the funeral of which we read in our text. So that the modern traveller may not only be certain of the place, but he may go to it up the same hill that Jesus climbed, and pass the very sepulchres that Jesus passed, in one of which the body of the young man was to be laid. There they are, those sepulchral caves, to this very day, on the western side of the old village.

To some people the very obscurity and unimportance of little old towns and villages give them a fascination. While the great world has been excited by its revolutions and wars, the ambitions and rivalries of its mighty men, its gigantic commercial enterprises, by the glitter and splendour of wealth, and the eager rush for pleasure,—in these little, unknown places life has been going on quietly and without ostentation. But still there has been *life*. The poorest village has human homes in it, where men and women have lived and loved and died; human homes made sacred by sweet wedded love, and the endearing ways of little children. The poorest village has its grave-yard too, where its “rude forefathers” sleep the sleep of death. The ambition of the world’s great man, whose sphere of action is the proud, grand, restless city,—may mock the homely joys and obscure destinies of untaught villagers. Grandeur may hear, with a disdainful smile, the short and simple annals of the poor; but he whose heart, not being over full of worldly ambition and care for worldly grandeur, has some room in it for the love of his neighbour, will surely find a charm in those quiet scenes, where quiet lives have fulfilled their earthly destinies, and in quietness passed away.

2. *But now let us, in imagination, take ourselves back to our Saviour’s day; and by the same power let us stand at the western gate of this obscure Nain, where we look, past the village burying-place, into the valley of Esdraelon. We see coming up the ascent a somewhat large number of people. In the front walks Jesus of Nazareth.*

How shall you think of Him? For my part I think of Him as I have seen Him pourtrayed in some great pictures, pictures by

men who reverently studied His character, and then with the touch of genius made it manifest in their representations of Him. But supposing you have not seen, or can but indistinctly recall any such pictures, I would suggest that you call to mind, as well as you can, the prominent phases of His disposition, which you know so well from your study of the Gospels. Call to mind His love, His pitifulness, His strength of will, His power of self-sacrifice, His righteousness, His great, never-failing brotherly-kindness; and try to think how a man of about thirty years of age would appear who possessed such qualities. If we have any skill at all in physiognomy, I think we shall be able by this process to imagine the appearance of Jesus.

Well, He comes up the hill towards Nain. With Him are His disciples, those few men whom He had chosen out of the world to be His especial friends, and under the influence of that friendship to learn the truths of the kingdom of heaven, so that they might teach them to others. And with these disciples is the multitude, drawn together for the most part, I suppose, by the fame of His miracles and the eager expectancy to see something wonderful for themselves.

They come all together slowly up the hill. Presently, from out the city gate, we see coming forth another smaller company. We hear the lamentations of weeping women, and observe sad, tearful looks on the faces of the men. But our attention is chiefly taken by the dead body of a young man, whom they are carrying to the grave, and by his mother, a widow. We learn that he is her only son, and she is now desolate and alone.

Ere the grave is reached the two companies meet, and lo, Jesus approaches the sorrow-stricken mother, and bids her dry her tears. "Weep not," He says; and then going to the bier He touches it. The bearers, feeling, as people always seem to have felt, that He had authority, stood still. I can imagine a deep, expectant silence settled upon the crowd as Jesus touched the bier and stopped its progress. What could it all mean? There, lying stiff and enshrouded upon the bier, is the pale, dead youth, and beside him stands the man of whom it was said, in a sense in which it could be said of none other,—*"in Him was life."*

And what does it mean? What is going to happen? But the on-lookers are not left much time for wonderment. The deep, strange silence is broken by the Master's voice. "Young man, I say unto thee, arise."

"What means He? Who is He that He should speak such words?" Such questions, perhaps, come hurrying into the minds of some, to be answered by this strange sight—"He that was dead sat up and began to speak. And Jesus gave him to his mother."

No wonder that fear took hold upon them all! No wonder that they glorified God! Surely in this Great Prophet who could recall the dead to life, He had visited His people.

3. *Do you believe that wonderful story?* Do you believe that it is really a narrative of facts?

(a) Some would answer, quite light-heartedly, "Indeed we do not. It would be a violation of the laws of nature, which is impossible. It is a myth, sir; a myth. Pretty and entertaining, but a myth nevertheless. Every religion has its myths, and this is one of the myths of Christianity."

(b) And others would say, "Yes, we believe that the story is in substance true. It is told in a very circumstantial way, all the oldest manuscripts contain it, and certainly Luke may be taken as a reliable historian. But the story can be explained. The young man was not really dead, he was in a trance state. Medical knowledge was not great among the Jews. It must often have been difficult with their lack of scientific skill to ascertain whether a person was actually dead or not. Now Jesus, it is quite plain, had a greater perceptive faculty than almost anybody of whom we read, and He saw at a glance that the man was not really dead but sleeping a trance-sleep, and by mesmeric or some other power, He was able to awaken the sleeper."

(c) And yet others would say, "No, we do not believe the story, and it is no light thing to us not to be able to believe it. All these gospel narratives are sacred to us. They were made sacred in our childhood, as we heard them from our mothers' lips, or read in the dear old church. But, alas! we can no longer think of them as true—oh, that we could! We would give a great deal if we could regain the fondly remembered, enthusiastic faith

of childish years. But a greater acquaintance with the laws and workings of nature, greater study and greater thought have forced us,—not to cast these beautiful stories aside, we cling to them yet—but to think of them in a very different way. We believe that they still have deep meaning for the religious life of men, Divine teaching for the human soul,—but that they are actual narratives of facts we cannot now believe.”

(d) And there are yet others who say, “Yes, we believe the story, believe that it is actually and literally true.” And if you ask these believers on what grounds they hold such a faith in this modern, scientific age, they will answer, “Because we believe in Christ—we believe in His miracles, believe that He raised the dead, because we believe in Him. He first won us to faith in Himself, as the very Son of God, and then our old doubts as to His wonderful works took to themselves wings and flew away. By some means or other, which we think must have been the influence of God’s own Spirit, that old creed has taken such deep root in our souls that no sceptical criticism seems able to drag it up—‘And I believe in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary’—and believing that, we can believe all the rest.”

Brethren, who shall say that the reasoning is bad?

4. *Now, granting that the story is true, let us think for a moment of our Lord’s motive in bringing back life into the dead man.*

We read that it was *compassion*. The pale, haggard face of the weeping mother appealed to Him; her broken heart touched His heart. That was it. Did He not say at the very outset of His career, “God hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted?”

And for my part, I think He had no other motive than that. It was enough for Him that this poor widow-woman was in trouble, trouble such as some of you have known perchance—He needed no other inducement to stretch forth His life-giving hand.

We are not told that she was a particularly deserving woman, and I believe Jesus would have acted as He did if she had been a very bad woman. She was in distress. That was enough. Nor do I for one moment think that He wished to establish His

own position, or add to His influence, or give proof of His divinity, or make sure His claim to Messiahship by performing this wonderful work. He simply wished to heal a broken heart, and He did it.

I do not like to think of Christ as having had mixed motives. To me it seems to take away His glory if you suppose that He had Himself and His position partly in view when He did His works of mercy. It would savour somewhat of the spirit of those "who for a pretence make long prayers," or give largely to charities when subscription lists are published. No, Christ was not like that. He was the healer of the broken-hearted. He went about doing good. He did not think of Himself. Self was lost sight of. The joy set before Him was not self-glorification here or hereafter, but the redemption of the lost. It was not that men might cry "*Ecce Deus!*" that He endured the cross, despising the shame, but that He might save, and sanctify, and bless His brothers and His sisters in body and soul.

5. *There is a question which will, no doubt, occur to some in connection with this and the other stories of Christ's raising the dead. It is, where was the spirit of the dead person between the time of its departure from the body and its re-entrance into it?*

If, as some hold, the soul has no conscious existence after death until the body is raised at the general resurrection, there is, of course, not much difficulty about the question. But most of us believe that the soul *is* conscious immediately after death, and it seems hard to suppose that Christ should call back a soul from Paradise to re-endure the sufferings and to renew the struggle of their earthly life. This, however, is what we are bound to suppose if we are consistent, if we believe that the dead were really raised, and that the soul enters upon conscious life as soon as it has left the body. But there is a noticeable fact which will, I think, afford us some explanation of this matter if we still cling to the orthodox idea. It is, that the several persons whom our Lord restored from death to life have left no record of their experiences.

Now one would naturally suppose that the first thing these people would do would be to get their knowledge of the other

world put into writing. This has not been done. May we not then suppose that they were unable to do so, and unable because the Power which called them from their graves blotted out from their memory the things that had happened to them? Effaced from the memory, those experiences would be as if they had not been.

6. *And I can imagine another question being asked. Why does Jesus never give us back our loved ones now? I can imagine a broken-hearted mother asking, "Why does He not recall my son to life? You say that He is all-powerful still. I am broken-hearted. My sorrow is as heavy as that of the widow of Nain. Why does He not heal my wound? Has He forgotten to be gracious now that He has ascended up on high?"*

Oh, no, He has not forgotten. He is gracious still and pitiful. If He were now living here in flesh and blood, perhaps He might do it. And for the very reason that He is not any longer amongst us in the flesh, He no longer works physical miracles. He is amongst us only by His Spirit now, and His work is spiritual. And if poor mourners will but seek His sympathy He will soothe their pain, He will change that earthly longing to clasp in their arms again the earthly forms of their beloved dead, into a heavenly longing,—a longing to see them again, not here, but safe, and happy, and free from the burden of the flesh in the sweet and holy home above. He is saying to all sad hearts, even now, "Weep not." If you will listen reverently you may hear His voice, and He will put forth His hand and touch your soul with a touch of heavenly love.

7. In conclusion, let me remind you, not to frighten you, only to make you earnest, that *a day will come when you will be carried forth from your home to be laid in the grave.* All the plans and schemes that now you think so much of will be put aside then. All earthly treasures will have ceased to charm.

But death is not the end of existence, and one of the laws of God is this, that by the character we are forming here our lot will be determined in the land beyond the grave. *Each goes to his own place*, the place for which he has fitted himself.

For the righteous, those who have followed Jesus and taken

up the cross, there will be a conscious nearness to God, compared with which our earthly communion with Him is as darkness to sunlight. Yes, in His presence, on high, there is fullness of joy, at His right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

“It is not death to die—
To leave this weary road,
And midst the brotherhood on high,
To be at home with God.”

And now Christ calls us, that this joy may be ours. He bids us arise from the death of sin to the life of righteousness. “Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.”

MORETON-IN-MARSH.

J. KIRK PIKE.

Life Worth Living.

“WHOSE I AM, AND WHOM I SERVE.”—*Acts xxvii. 23.*

THE voyage of Paul, from Cæsarea towards Rome, was fraught with danger and disaster, culminating in shipwreck near the island, Malta, in the Mediteranean Sea. Paul had kept silence till the tempest became very alarming; he then lifted up his voice amid the raging elements, showing he was not in despair though destruction seemed so near, that he was not ashamed to own his Master in the most trying circumstances. While exhorting his fellow-passengers to “be of good cheer,” he unfurled the flag of the Gospel, and exhibited his colours in words full of force and meaning,—“*Whose I am, and whom I serve.*” His faith in God was not shaken by the fierce winds that blew, his inward peace was not disturbed by the huge waves that tossed and shattered the frail vessel; he knew that if the ship’s company obeyed his commands not one of them would perish, but safely come to land. The words, “*Whose I am,*” teach us—

I.—TO WHOM THE BELIEVER RIGHTEOUSLY BELONGS. On Mars' Hill Paul declared the fact that by *creation* we all belong to God. Our being comes from, and is sustained by Him. But, doubtless, here the apostle refers to the glorious fact that we are not our own, but are bought with a price, redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. The *body* of the apostle was in the custody of the Roman power, but his *soul* was in the keeping of Jesus. Not the sport of chance, the victim of fate, or the creature of circumstances, but the servant of the Lord. Though a prisoner, he was the Lord's free man; the dignity of Cæsar paled before the nobility of the prisoner Paul. O, that as Christians we could realize this great truth,—we belong to Christ. We are not at the bidding or purchase of whoever may bargain for us. Having escaped the bondage of Satan,—by solemn covenant and lifelong consecration,—we present ourselves living sacrifices, holy and acceptable unto the Saviour. Our *time, talents,—all we have and are belong to Him*. The words, "*Whom I serve,*" teach us—

II.—FOR WHOM THE BELIEVER REJOICINGLY LABOURS. The apostle had a high and noble idea of service. When he was a Pharisee, and persecuted the Christians, he prosecuted his cruel work energetically, because he thought he was doing God's service. When he became converted, the first question was, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" When fully informed and equipped for his Master's service, he entered upon it with extraordinary enthusiasm, and nothing could move him from the accomplishment of his single aim and steadfast purpose. "*I serve*" was his motto. (a) *He did not consult his own pleasure or will*. He was prepared to engage in difficult, self-denying work, suffer any loss for Christ's sake. (b) *He gave up all other masters*. Withdrew from society and scenes that once engaged and absorbed the best energies of his soul. (c) *He acted constantly as in his Master's presence*. Though sometimes deserted by men, he never felt alone; he could do all things through Christ who strengthened him. Communion and companionship with Christ kept his faith from faltering, his love from growing cold. (d) *He subordinated everything to the smile of his Master*. Not indifferent to the kindness and appreciation of men, he nevertheless

sought above all things to be accepted of Christ; so long 'as he could secure His approval, Satan might rage and the world might frown. An approving conscience, an assurance of all needed grace, a bright prospect of rest and reward in heaven—where he would be with Christ—kept him firm and faithful amid every trial and trouble he experienced.

Let us exult in the service of our risen Lord, and serve Him with all our ransomed powers. Our *feet* swift in obedience; *hands* stretched forth to every good deed; *tongue* vocal with prayer and praise and holy witnessing. Our *intellectual* and *emotional* powers of *head* and *heart* all engaged in *joyful, energetic, constant, ardent* service. Such service pleases God, prepares for higher employment in the skies. His servants increase in experimental knowledge of Him here, shall be *with Him, like Him, and see His face* hereafter. May the love of Christ to us, and *in* us, lead to the Christly consecration embodied in these words, "Whose I am, and whom I serve."

CLIFTON.

FREDERICK W. BROWN.

Demoniac of Gadara.

"AND WHEN HE WAS COME OUT OF THE SHIP, IMMEDIATELY THERE MET HIM OUT OF THE TOMBS A MAN WITH AN UNCLEAN SPIRIT," &c. —*Mark* v. 2-13.

IN this narrative we have an illustration of the terrible effects of sin, and the deadly purpose of the devil in regard to the creatures of God.

I.—THE DEMONIAIC. "A man with an unclean spirit." A bad case of demoniacal possession, so common in those days.

(1) *His dwelling*. "Among the tombs." Showing the dehumanizing effects of sin, in its power to associate man with (a) the unnatural and revolting. "Among the tombs." In the dark, damp caverns and recesses where the skeletons of the dead were mouldering. (b) In the permanency of its deadly spell. "Had

his dwelling among the tombs." No periodical or temporary thing. "His dwelling." Can we not recall many whose awful experience is here illustrated? Men, and, alas, women, who are taking pleasure in, and making their dwelling among the morally putrescent and loathsome; walking "among the tombs" of their former nobility and virtues.

(2) *His desperation.* "No man could bind him." The character of many is here photographed. How many do we know who "have been often bound" with pledges, and fetters of human kindness and sympathy, only to be "plucked asunder" in temptation's fearful frenzy.

(3) *His strength.* "The fetters broken." No human appliances can so bind sin that it cannot break its fetters.

(4) *His misery.* "Crying and cutting himself." Sin is self-love under a dreadful delusion. (a) It is misery,—"crying." (b) It is damaging,—"cutting." (c) It is unseemly,—"with stones." (d) It is self-inflicted torture,—"cutting himself." The sinner chooses his own weapons and does his own "cutting."

(5) *His ferocity.* "No man could tame him." Showing the utter powerlessness of earthly appliances to conquer sin. Showing also that bitter experience will not improve the sinner. How many, with the burning memory of a most awful experience, are still "crying and cutting" themselves with the stones of sinful gratification and pleasure.

(6) *His sight.* "Saw Jesus." The most important crisis in the life of any man is when he first sees Jesus. He must be either better or worse ever afterwards. Jesus must either leave a blessing or a curse.

(7) *His devotion.* "Worshipped Him." Had some knowledge of him; felt he needed help, and believed Jesus was able to help him.

(8) *His recoil.* "What have I to do with Thee." In cases of demoniacal possession it would seem that at times the intellect and also the will were untrammelled by Satanic agency, and at other times the whole man was under his control. When the demoniac saw Jesus, it happened that his intellect and will were free, and "he ran and worshipped Him." But ere he began, Satan projected himself over the entire man, and instead of

worship he uttered abuse. "What have I to do with Thee." This question may mean, (1) "What have I," a fallen angel, "to do with Thee," who art only the Saviour of fallen men? Or, it may mean, (2) "What, is it your business?" If the former, see Satan's knowledge as (a) a *theologian*; if the latter, see his (b) *audacity*. He was making this poor wretch unfit to live or die, a curse to himself and a terror to the community, and when Jesus came to see about it, Satan impudently replies, "What, is it your business?"

(9) *His request*. "Torment me not." They were having a passably good time of it, *for devils*, when they were making this poor man so miserable. (1) To break his power over the lives of men adds to Satan's misery. "Torment me not." (2) He knows that Jesus has the power and purpose to do it. "I adjure thee." (3) He is sound in his theology. "Son of the most high God."

II.—THE CURE. "Come out of the man." These words are (1) Authoritative. (2) Sympathetic. (3) Mandatory. Notice the demons cast out.

(1) *Their number*. "Legion."

(2) *Their request*. "Not send them away." The devil, though cast out, does not like to be sent "away." If cast out of one member of the family, nothing suits him so well as to enter another,—out of the wife into the husband, out of the brother into the sister, out of the child into the father.

(3) *Their degradation*. "Send us into the swine." The tendency of the devil is to make man *swinish*. He only has the result here without the process. The tendency of sin is to pollute and degrade the sinner, until swinelike he is at home when wallowing in the polluting mire of his own appetites and passions.

(4) *Their permission*. "Jesus gave them leave." Learn here that the devil cannot enter into even a pig without getting leave of Jesus Christ. How safe then God's children should feel. From the first, Jesus neither followed the suggestions of the devil nor granted his requests. Why then did he allow him to enter these swine? It may be the herd belonged to some old Jew, who, though contrary to their law, was running a brisk

pork business among the Gentiles of Gadara. Be that as it may, we know that Jesus often permits the devil to enter the herds and accumulations of men who, openly or secretly, violate his law, sending them down the steep places of financial disaster and insolvency.

(5) *Their influence.* "The herd ran violently down." (1) The movements of sin are *rapid*. "Ran." (2) *Exhaustive.* "Violently." (3) *Descending.* "Down a steep." (4) *Uniform in effect.* "The herd ran." Not some of them. In their haste they did not scatter, but all went straight to destruction. The devil never entered any creature of God but with the purpose to destroy. Some he may send more leisurely "down" than others, but they are all a unit in this, that they are moving downwards towards the great sea. Hogs, like sinners, are noted for their headstrong proclivities, and the determination to go east if you urge them to go west. How even the devil could induce this immense herd to run towards a given point is truly surprising to me. The surprise, however, is more than equalled in the moral world, where we see the rich and poor, the cultured and illiterate, the proud millionaire and the ragged tramp, a unit in their forgetfulness of God, and in the direction in which they move.

PHILADELPHIA.

THOMAS KELLY.

Work Appointed and Rewarded by Christ.

"TO EVERY MAN HIS WORK."—*Mark* xiii. 34.

"BEHOLD, I COME QUICKLY; AND MY REWARD IS WITH ME, TO GIVE EVERY MAN ACCORDING AS HIS WORK SHALL BE."—*Revelation* xxii. 12.

"THE modern majesty," says Carlyle, "consists in work. What a man can do is his greatest ornament, and he always consults his dignity by doing it." But this is true of all times—man doing his right work, to the best of his ability, with the highest ends in view.

These two passages have to do with work—each man's work, and the manner of its discharge, in the light of judgment and

eternity. The close connexion between these two parts of Scripture. The first, taken from the parable, describes the work as given out to each servant. The second speaks of the examination of the work done, and the reward given to each servant according to its quality and amount. The words, unspeakably solemn, but as encouraging as solemn to every true-hearted, faithful man.

I.—CHRIST APPOINTS EVERY CHRISTIAN'S WORK.

(a) Each has *his own* work to do for Christ.

(b) Each must receive the appointment from *Christ Himself*.

(c) Each one, therefore, is *responsible to Christ alone*.

II.—CHRIST, RETURNING, BRINGS WITH HIM EVERY MAN'S REWARD.

Behold! A call to attention, energy, and eager expectation. Christ thus frequently prefaced His statements, admonitions, and warnings.

The *startling character of this announcement*,—"Behold, I come quickly." "Quickly," though many centuries have elapsed since the announcement was made; but we know little of relative nearness and distance in point of time, and when we think in the spirit, vast periods of time appear to be brief. Besides, "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years," &c.

WHEN *Christ comes He will bring every man's reward or recompense*. His clear knowledge of the life and work of each of the vast multitude. The reward will be in proportion to the work done.

True, salvation is by grace, and the reward is of grace, and it is striking that in the Greek the same term is used for "grace" and "gift." For instance, in 2 Cor. viii. 7 the very power to give money is termed, interchangeably, a grace and a gift, and the grace of giving is thus classed with faith, and utterance, and knowledge, as a thing to be desired.

Application.—In view of the all-revealing and rewarding day, let us live while we live. Let us also get stimulus by the assurance that a gracious and ample reward shall follow honest, earnest, and persevering work.

SOUTHAMPTON.

SAMUEL B. STRIBLING.

The Law of Laws.

"LOVE ONE ANOTHER AS I HAVE LOVED YOU."—*John* xiii. 34.

THIS was called the "New Commandment." It is not new, however, in essence; it is older than the universe, old as the mind of God. But in its form and motive it is new; it never came embodied in a human life until Christ came eighteen hundred years ago. Had the words been, "love others as they love you," so complex and simple are the emotions of men in relation to each other that a correct idea of the law could scarcely have been obtained; or had they been, "as God hath loved you," there would still have been a difficulty in the way of reaching an accurate idea, "For," says Rev. C. A. Row, Prebendary of St. Paul's, "history proves that this danger is no visionary one. When men have measured their obligations by their own imperfect views of the attributes of the Deity, they have taken their sterner, rather than their benevolent aspects for their rule. The gods of the ancient world were no subjects fit for human imitation. Nor is the Deity of the modern philosopher more suited when he presents the embodied aspect of inexorable fate. Providence permits a ship to sink to the bottom of the ocean, and no aiding hand is near, but all is stern and terrible. Its undeviating laws bend not. Are these dark and mysterious aspects of Deity to be the subjects of human imitation? The Evangelists have responded to the question by presenting to us Jesus." In relation to this law we make the following observations:—

I.—It is EASILY UNDERSTOOD. Who, with the Gospel in his hand, can fail to understand the kind of love with which Christ loved the world? First: *His love was essentially disinterested.* There was not a particle of selfishness in it. He had nothing to gain by it. There was nothing that could enhance His bliss or brighten His glory. Secondly: *His love was practically forgiving.* His love was not the love for friends, but the love for enemies, the most malignant. Forgiving love, is love in its highest strength and grandest aspect. Thirdly: *His love was self-sacrificing.*

“He loved us and gave Himself for us.” Another observation which we make concerning this love is that—

II.—It is UNIVERSALLY BINDING. It embraces every man in whatever land he lives, whatever the colour of his skin, under whatever government he may live, in whatever position he sustains; rich or poor, educated or ignorant, ruler or ruled, it reaches the most distant. Not one can extricate himself from its binding obligations; it speaks in the same voice, in the same imperative tone to the prince and the peasant, the millionaire and the pauper, the trader and the warrior, the judge and the criminal, the doctor and his patient, the lawyer and his client. To each and all it carries the same Divine mandate. Fools say that such Divine commands are not practicable until the world gets better: they do not recognise the indubitable fact that Christianity is a law not for man as a saint, but for man as a sinner; not for man as he is to be, but for man as he is. Another observation we offer concerning this law is that—

III.—It is SOUL-REACHING. It goes through all externalisms, penetrates the depths of the soul, and touches the central springs of action. All human conduct springs from love of some kind or other, the love of the good or the bad. “*Love one another.*” Christianity legislates for our affections, and thus obtains an authority over the very springs of our being, and the actions of our lives. Verily, the law of the Lord is broad: it embraces the entire man and the entire of every man. Another observation we offer concerning this law is—

IV.—It is WORLD-REFORMING. Let this law be universally obeyed, and the whole race will be changed;—no more tyrannies from despots, chicanery from rogues, murder from assassins, butcheries from soldiers, imposture from priests, monopoly from misers, deception from liars. All evils will be swept away, the world’s night will be turned into day, its desert into Paradise, its tumults into music. The whole social heavens will pass away, and there will come a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness; and joy like morning dew will be distilled on all hearts. Another observation we offer concerning this law is—

V.—It is BEYOND IMPROVEMENT. Human legislators are constantly altering their laws. The precious time of the nation, as well as the money of the people, is expended in the constant modification of laws which foolish, ill-educated, and ill-informed men, under the character of statesmen, have enacted and enforced; and such men, in the character of statesmen, are constantly making laws that will have in the future to be modified or abolished. But this law is incapable of modification; it is more unalterable than the settled heavens above us; it is like the grain of corn, you can add nothing to it, take nothing from it, it is perfect in itself. If men could repeal or modify this law, they would, but they cannot, they can no more do so than alter any of the laws of nature. Another observation we offer concerning this law is—

VI.—It is REVEALED IN A LIFE. It does not come to us in propositions, but in a person, and that person a man, and that man the greatest that ever lived—the “Man Christ Jesus.” This makes this law the easiest to understand, the mightiest to influence. A code containing ten thousand volumes would, as compared with the code written in this one life, be as night to day—as impotence to might. Christ is not merely the Law-giver, but Himself the Law. The whole obligation of man is reduced to two words—“Follow Me.”

LONDON.

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

Work.

“MAN GOETH FORTH UNTO HIS WORK AND TO HIS LABOUR UNTIL THE EVENING.”—*Psalms* civ. 23.

WE need to beware of imperfect views of religion that narrow it down to one side of life. The cry that the pulpit should confine itself to preaching the Gospel, often ignores the fact that the Gospel bears on life in all its aspects. It makes all life sacred, making the Divine law bear on it all. It has a message

for the man who idles away life, for the master who grinds down his workpeople, and for the man who does not honestly give the service he is paid for.

I.—WORK IS A DUTY. "Six days shalt thou labour," is as much a Divine ordinance as is the command to do no work on the seventh. He who is idle seven days is as out of harmony with God's law as is he who toils without a break. Paul's command, "That if any man would not work neither should he eat," represents the ideal to which society, as it grows perfect, will tend. For the idea that work is a disgrace, and that the idle man, because he is idle, can look down upon the toiler as an inferior, is a notion so foolish that surely, with advancing intelligence, it must go. Certainly it cannot be held by the man who accepts Bible teaching, and it is, further, against the teaching of nature. The idle man is neither happy nor healthy. Thus nature has written on idleness its condemnation, and testifies to us that work is a duty.

And let no man think it a disgrace, or try to hide it, when Christ Himself sanctified toil and stamps it with His approval.

Surely, one day, men will learn that to do nothing is disgraceful, and that God sends every man into this world to find his work and to *do it*. Says *Carlyle*, "To make some nook of God's creation a little fruitfuller, better, more worthy of God; to make some human hearts a little wiser, manfuller, happier,—more blessed, less accursed! It is work for a God."

II.—WORK IS A RIGHT. While some will not work, many who would cannot get it to do. And men and women are in poverty, and near to starvation, who would gladly toil had they the chance. The state of the labour-market is certainly not satisfactory. There is a feverish competition in which, too often, workmen are treated only as chattels, to be used when needed and thrown out of work when not required. Now it is not enough to quote Political Economy in defence of this. The science may rightly be based on the principles of selfishness, but the practice of men who profess to honour God must be based on Christian law. We need to have the teaching of Christ applied more broadly to this than it has ever yet been. No employer

surely has a right to think simply of getting all he can out of his men, and then to discharge them when trade is slack, while he himself is living luxuriously on the fruit of their toil. God has made land enough for all to live on, and the earth is capable of producing far more than men require, yet crowds are driven from the country into the towns, and round the dock-gates in London numbers of men assemble, hours before they open, in the hope of earning enough to maintain a bare existence, while many in this land of wealth who earnestly seek for work can get none to do. Here we have a constant element of danger to the State. Indeed it is said that if the disaffected and desperate in London could but combine, the city would be pillaged. Beyond doubt there is a most terrible evil existing, which employers and statesmen will have to face, and which can never be remedied until it is treated according to the law of God.

III.—WORK HAS, OR OUGHT TO HAVE, A LIMIT. “Until the evening.” Yet how many work at such a rate of wages that they have to toil night and day to maintain existence, with no limit to their toil save that imposed by the necessity of sleep. There comes to them no evening of rest and recreation. Life is but the dull monotony of a hand-to-hand fight with the starvation that is always near.

Surely the match-box makers and sempstresses of our large cities, toiling in the vile places that are all they know of home, are a standing witness against those who live in the plenty purchased with their lives. No rich employer has a right to plead that he gives the current rate and does as others do. That plea would stand for all crimes. The man who makes work for others a ceaseless drudgery is verily guilty before God.

There is another direction in which the truth holds. Here is a man who gets engrossed in business. He loves it until he gives his whole life to it. Surely there is need to remind him that to labour there is a limit, that health and mind and soul and God have claims to which he should respond.

And there are those to whom business is ever a burden and a worry. Things do not go well, and the man cannot get invoices and prices and competitors out of his mind. Surely he should

try to set a limit to his labour. It is possible to get relief from it for a time if he has learnt to cast his care on God. And, moreover, such toil defeats itself. Many a man would do more work if he worked less hours. Often it happens that a man does badly in business hours because home, into the evening and night, he carries the work he should have left behind.

"Come ye apart," said Christ, "and rest awhile." That is a need of life. No labour is right that does not allow it. No man does himself justice or gives God His due service when he lets his work monopolise his life.

IV.—WORK MUST HAVE A TERMINATION. Just as the hours hastening on limit opportunity, and the shadows lengthen until evening comes and work is ended; so life's days go, carrying with them openings that can never be ours again, and the shadows draw out, and the sun sets, and the day is at an end, and its work is *done*—good or bad it must stand for ever. How man will toil when he knows that on it depends home with its rest and happiness. And shall not we toil earnestly in the Master's service when we know that on our faithful labour depends the home beyond with its bliss. Let us all say with our Lord, "I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work."

"'Tis not for man to trifle! Life is brief,
 And sin is here.
 Our age is but the falling of a leaf,
 A dropping tear;
 We have no time to sport among the hours;
 All must be earnest in a world like ours.

"Not many lives, but only one have we;
 One, only one!
 How sacred should that one life be!
 That narrow span,
 Day after day filled up with blessed toil,
 Hour after hour still bringing in new spoil."

GERMS OF PRACTICAL THOUGHT EVOLVED FROM
THE APOCALYPSE.

[The writer of these Homiletic Sketches aims not to decide between the numerous theories and speculations which the interpreters of this book have propounded. So far as his work is concerned it does not matter who the author may be, the exact time in which he lived, the place of his writing, or the peculiarities of his language. The whole book appears to his mind as a *grand, prophetic poem*, full of strange and grotesque symbols. As a prophecy, some have regarded it as *already fulfilled*, such as Grotius, Hammond, Bossuet, Calmet, Wetstein, Eichhorn, Hug, Herder, Ewald, Lücke, De Wette, Dusterdieck, Stuart, Lee, and Maurice. These are called the *Præterist* expositors. Some have regarded it as yet almost entirely *unfulfilled*. All events referred to, except those in the first three chapters, they take as pointing to what is yet to come. Among such interpreters in recent times are Drs. Todd, Maitland, Newton, De Burgh, &c. These are called *Futurists*. Some regard it as in a *progressive course* of fulfilment, running on from the first century to the end of time. Amongst these interpreters the following names are included: Mede, Sir I. Newton, Vitringa, Bengel, Woodhouse, Faber, E. B. Elliott, Wordsworth, Hengstenberg, Ebrard, &c. These are called *Historical* expositors. The present Homiletic Sketches will be drawn in the light of this school. The whole book is a symbolical representation of a great moral campaign between right and wrong, running on from the dawn of the Christian era to the crash of doom. Babylon here is, so to say, the metropolis of evil and Jerusalem the metropolis of good. The battle is not between the mere forms, organizations, and institutions of good and evil, but between their *spirit*, their essence. The victories of Christ here are, to use the language of Carpenter, "against all wrong-thoughtedness, wrong-heartedness, and wrong-spiritedness."]

No. XI.

The Words of Christ to the Congregation at Pergamos.

"AND TO THE ANGEL OF THE CHURCH IN PERGAMOS WRITE; THESE THINGS SAITH HE WHICH HATH THE SHARP SWORD WITH TWO EDGES; I KNOW THY WORKS, AND WHERE THOU DWELLEST, EVEN WHERE SATAN'S SEAT IS: AND THOU HOLDEST FAST MY NAME, AND HAST NOT DENIED MY FAITH, EVEN IN THOSE DAYS WHEREIN ANTIPAS WAS MY FAITHFUL MARTYR, WHO WAS SLAIN AMONG YOU, WHERE SATAN DWELLETH. BUT I HAVE A FEW THINGS AGAINST THEE, BECAUSE THOU HAST THERE THEM THAT HOLD THE DOCTRINE OF BALAAM, WHO TAUGHT BALAC TO CAST A STUMBLING-BLOCK BEFORE THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, TO EAT THINGS SACRIFICED UNTO IDOLS, AND TO COMMIT FORNICATION. SO HAST THOU ALSO THEM THAT HOLD THE DOCTRINE OF THE NICOLAITANES, WHICH THING I HATE. REPENT; OR ELSE I WILL COME UNTO THEE QUICKLY, AND WILL FIGHT AGAINST THEM WITH THE SWORD OF MY MOUTH. HE THAT HATH AN EAR, LET HIM HEAR WHAT THE SPIRIT SAITH UNTO THE CHURCHES; TO HIM THAT OVERCOMETH WILL I GIVE TO EAT OF THE HIDDEN MANNA, AND WILL GIVE HIM A WHITE STONE, AND IN THE STONE A NEW NAME WRITTEN, WHICH NO MAN KNOWETH SAVING HE THAT RECEIVETH IT."—*Rev. ii. 12-17.*

FEW, if any parts of the world present greater attractions than Pergamos to the

student of nature, history, or art. It is associated with memorable names and won-

derful exploits. It is the native land of Homer, the oldest of the world's poets, and of Herodotus, the father of history, and "three of the seven wise men here began their life. Among the wonders of the world it boasted its Temple at Ephesus, its Mausoleum in Caria, and its Colossus at Rhodes. The finest work of art, the celebrated Venus, is attributed to this people."

Pergamos is not the least attractive spot in this important district of the globe. It is about three days' journey from Smyrna, on the banks of Caicus, in the province of Mysia, a little river famed in classic story. It stands under the modern name of Bergama. Though it has fallen from its original grandeur, it has not become a desolation, or an abode for wild beasts. In the passage before us we have the record of the language which Christ, from the deep silence of eternity, addressed to a congregation of His professed disciples there.

In looking into this language we discover a *tone of authority, a discrimination of character, a reformative*

demand, and a promise of blessedness. Here we have—

I.—A TONE OF AUTHORITY.
"These things saith He which hath the sharp sword with two edges." A sword is an emblem of authority; a "two-edged one" may express authority as well as terrible force. In verse 16, of chap. i., it is said, "Out of His mouth went a two-edged sword." It is a moral, not a material sword, the sword of truth, a sword that inflicts no wounds upon existence, but upon the *errors and wrongs* of existence. Two remarks are suggested—(1) *Christ's truth is authoritative*: the sword is an emblem of authority. In every utterance of His, there we have it. "Thus saith the Lord." It comes, not for mere study, or speculation, but with a binding force. It is not merely to be studied, but obeyed. (2) *Christ's truth is mighty*. It is a "two-edged sword." It cuts in all directions, cuts to the central roots of error. What battles it has fought, what victories it has won! It destroys all wrong thoughts, all corrupt passions, all wicked resolves.

"It brings into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." In this language we have—

II.—A DISCRIMINATION OF CHARACTER. "*I know thy works.*" The passage suggests

(1) That Christ is fully acquainted with circumstances under which all moral character is formed.

(2) Christ describes exactly the moral position in which the Church lived. "*And where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is.*" "Satan's seat" was there. It was the metropolis of a heathen divinity—Æsculapius, the god of healing. "In his honour a living serpent was kept and fed in the Temple, while the serpent-worship was so marked a characteristic of the place, that we find this reptile engraved on many of its coins. Again, the practice of the priests of Æsculapius, consisted much in charms and incantations, and crowds resorted to his Temple, where lying miracles of healing were vaunted to be performed, which were, doubtless, used by Satan to obstruct and counterfeit the work of the

apostles and the Gospel."—*Rev. H. B. Tristram, LL.D., F.R.S.* Here, too, we are told that in this city was held the "*doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.*" Also the "*doctrine of the Nicolaitanes.*" The people holding these doctrines taught the people to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication. "The eating of idol meats would, in such a city as Pergamos, be as great a stumbling-block as caste at the present day in India. To refuse to partake of things offered to idols was not only to renounce idolatry, it was more; it was to abstain from almost every public and private festivity, to withdraw, in great measure, from the social life of the place." Here, too, we are informed, Antipas, Christ's faithful martyr, was slain.

Such was the Satanic scene in which the disciples of Christ lived and wrought in Pergamos. Here they formed their character and accomplished whatever good they did. Here

is one of the million proofs that man's moral character is not necessarily formed by external circumstances, however antagonistic those circumstances may be. Our benevolent Maker has invested every moral mind with the power not only to rise above external circumstances, but to subordinate the most hostile to their advantage.

The passage suggests (2) That the eye of Christ recognises every part of a man's character, whether good or bad. In all characters, even the best, there is a mingling of the good and bad, and the elements of each are recognised. Mark what was here said concerning the good of the Church at Ephesus. "*Thou holdest fast My name, and hast not denied My faith.*" Mark also what He said concerning the evil in them. It would seem that they did not sufficiently resist the wrong. "*I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.*"

It would seem from this that they might have done more than they did in expelling by moral force such base and pernicious characters from their midst. So far as they failed, they were defective in faith, zeal, and courage. Thus Christ marks the evil and the good in the character of His disciples, approving the one and reproving the other.

In this language we have also—

III.—A REFORMATIVE DEMAND. "*Repent; or else I will come unto thee.*" (1) Repentance is *moral reformation*. It is not a mere change in theological belief, in outward conduct, or in ecclesiastical relations and rituals, but in the heart, in the master disposition of the soul. It is the turning of the whole from the selfish to the benevolent, from the wrong to the right. It is moreover a law binding on all men. His word commands man everywhere to "repent." It is the necessity of all men. "*Unless ye repent ye shall likewise all perish.*" (2) Repentance is an *urgent necessity*. "*Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly.*" I will

come in retributive justice, and that quickly—quick as the lightning. “*I will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.*” Not a material sword, but a moral. His word has a power to destroy as well as to save. A word of His can annihilate the universe. He has only to will and it is done. His word carries fatal pestilences, devastating storms, and blighting famines. What an argument of terror is this urging the duty of moral reformation! In this language we have—

IV.—A PROMISE OF BLESSEDNESS. “*He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.*” The promises here made by the Spirit are to a certain class—those who have conquered. Who are the conquerors in life’s battle? Not those who by sword or bayonet or any deadly instruments have destroyed the mortal lives of men. Such

are not the victors, but *victims* to their own vanity, ambition, greed, and brutal passions. The real conquerors in life’s battles are those who conquer all the evils in their own nature, and get the mastery over all their impulses and passions. He is the sublimest conqueror who has crushed most of the wrongs and evils of life. Two blessings are here promised to such. (1) *The choicest nourishment.* The “*hidden manna.*” “*I will give to eat of the hidden manna.*” Though they absent themselves from the sumptuous feasts of idolatry, referred to in the previous verses, they shall have food far better—the “*hidden manna.*” Food fulfils two functions. It satisfies and it strengthens. The best food is that which supplies the most happiness and the most vigour. This “*hidden manna,*” which is Christ, does this. He is the “*Bread of Life*”—the Bread that came down from heaven, and which alone can appease the hunger and strengthen the souls of men. It promises (2) *The highest distinction.* “*I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name*

written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it."

"Perhaps," says Dr. Tristram, "the white stone, the pure and sparkling diamond, may be placed in contrast with the charms supplied to the votaries of Æsculapius, with the cabalistic characters inscribed on them, and which were worn as armlets to protect them from disease. This spiritual stone, inscribed, like the Urim, with a name which no man

knew, may set forth the revelation which the Lord will make to His faithful people, of mysteries hidden before from kings and prophets, like the hidden manna and the Urim, seen by the high-priest alone, but which revelation of the glory of God can only be known by those who have received Him."

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RELATIONSHIP OF THE BIBLE TO MAN'S CONSCIENCE.—"I do not oppose the conscience to the Bible; but I say the Bible is meant and fitted for the conscience as the telescope is meant for the eye. The conscience is the eye, the Bible is the telescope; and as the telescope does not change the faculty of sight, but brings more objects within its range, so does the Bible to the conscience. I believe that God has left no man without the means of salvation, and that a man without a Bible has still a God, and a God whom he can get acquainted with through his conscience: and I believe that salvation means a growing in acquaintanceship with God, and in conformity to His will."—THOMAS ERSKINE.

Seedlings.

Days of the Christian Year.

Luke xiv. 11.

(Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity.)

“FOR WHOSOEVER EXALTETH HIMSELF SHALL BE ABASED; AND HE THAT HUMBLETH HIMSELF SHALL BE EXALTED.”

OUR Lord prefaces this great principle of His kingdom with a counsel of prudence which we may find useful in the regulation of our social life. It was suggested by conduct the opposite of which He would prefer to see in His followers,—by a selfish and unseemly scramble for the highest seats at table. We may gather from this “parable” (1) that it is right of us to wish to stand well with our fellows: He holds out the honour to be gained from man as an end we may rightly have in view. And whilst we may both strive and pray for “the wise indifference of the wise” to the judgments of society, we may well shrink from the reckless unconcern of the foolhardy, and we may fortify our purpose to study, to strive, to execute to the full height of our capacity by the hope that we shall not only have the honour which cometh from God, but the approval which proceeds from man also. The com-

mendation (honour) of the good is no mean weapon in the armoury of righteousness. (2) That modesty rather than assumption is the path which leads to it. There are, indeed, many who take a lower place and do a lesser work all their life because they entirely underestimate their own worth. On the other hand, there are very many more who suffer serious loss in general estimation and in the moral influence they wield, because they assume a virtue which they do not possess, and place themselves in a position from which everybody desires they should be dislodged. But our Lord here affirms,—what He very soon repeats,—the twofold, fundamental principle of His spiritual kingdom, viz.—

I.—THE HUMILIATION OF THE HAUGHTY-HEARTED. The man who exalts himself certainly is (1) not he who takes an exalted view of the dignity of his spiritual nature; (2) nor he that by diligence and enterprise wins a position of commanding power; (3) nor he that calmly and quietly takes the place of influence and honour to which the suffrages of his fellows call him; (4) nor he that gives

hearty thanks that, amid much that is lost, he retains his spiritual integrity (see Ps. xli. 12. 2 Tim. iv. 7). He is the man who *credits himself with a righteousness which he does not possess*; who makes the fatal mistake of the Laodicean Church (Rev. iii. 17); who thinks he is right with God when God is regarding him with condemnation and Divine dislike; whose "humility" is a hollow formalism; whose "faith" is a hard dogmatism; whose "zeal" is a blind zealotry; whose "hope" is a miserable delusion. Such a man may hold up his head for a long time in pharisaic effrontery, but either on earth or at the day of judgment, when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed, and they that think they see will be shewn to have been utterly blind (Jno. ix. 39), their character will be exposed and themselves be dishonoured.

II.—THE EXALTATION OF THE HUMBLE. The man that humbles himself before God is (1) not he that applies opprobrious language to himself; (2) nor he that can be wrought upon by sacred oratory to an intensity of self-reproach: it is he who, by the teaching of God's word and the enlightening influence of His spirit, has been led to *take a true view of his own unworthiness and weakness*; who, therefore, confesses his sin to God, who, therefore, seeks the daily

and hourly upholding of his strength, who, therefore, watches vigilantly and strives strenuously to do the Father's will and to gain His approval: for him is a Saviour's smile below, and the glory of the Heavenly Kingdom.

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Luke x. 2.

(The Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity.)

"PRAY THE LORD OF THE HARVEST THAT HE WOULD SEND FORTH LABOURERS UNTO HIS HARVEST."

OUR Lord is indicating the needs of humanity, in its sickness, sorrow, ignorance, sin; and is instructing and inspiring those who shall be qualified to meet those needs, healing that sickness, consoling that sorrow, enlightening that ignorance, and saving from that sin. The charge of His which our text contains at once discovers to us—

I.—THE DEMAND FOR WORK IN THE EVANGELIC ENTERPRISE. It has to reap and ingather "a harvest." So work is demanded. (1) *The harvest itself* demands work. For it is (a) *a result* of a preparatory past. All harvests are. (b) *A supply* of needed resources. The richest harvests are moral. (c) *A shameful waste* if not rightly cared for. Rotting corn-fields that were ripe for use, and ready for reaping, but neglected through

indolence, are a shame and a scandal; so here. (2) *The fact of Christ's relationship to the harvest demands work*—He is "Lord of the Harvest. (a) *Its Proprietor.* (b) *Its Producer.* Then it must be reaped.

II.—THE SHORT SUPPLY OF WORKERS IN THE EVANGELIC ENTERPRISE. "The labourers are few." True then, and though their number has been increasing, and was never so large as to-day, it is still true. True (1) *in comparison with the labourers in other fields.* Commerce has its millions, where Evangelic philanthropy has only its scores of workers. (2) *In contrast with the work to be done.* Let every soul of man needing blessing stand for an ear of corn, and every present worker on their behalf as a reaper; and lo! there is but a solitary worker to far-reaching leagues of richly covered corn.

III.—THE DIVINE METHOD OF ENSURING A SUFFICIENT SUPPLY OF WORKERS FOR THIS EVANGELIC ENTERPRISE. "Pray." The prayer enjoined is sure to avail because it is prayer (1) *to the Right Being.* He cares for the harvest-field; it is His; He cares for the harvest;—all the operation is His, and the toilers are His workmen, moved by His inspiration, controlled by Him; receiving His high wage of benediction. It is prayer (2) *for an object that*

is definite, and that is being attained even while it is truly presented. It is not vague, but a clear, distinct, intelligent, as well as devout desire. The very prayer itself moves and qualifies those who offer it, as well as influences others. Therefore, "pray." EDITOR.

LUKE xiv. 22.

(*The Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity.*)

"YET THERE IS ROOM."

THERE is a *dark* side to this parable, black as pillar of cloud was to Egyptians. The rejectors of the call of Christ find here a very terrible aspect of truth. But there is a *bright* side to this parable, light as the pillar of cloud was to the Israelites. The acceptors of Christ's call find brightness and beauty here. Much of this brightness beams upon us from the fact of *the amplitude of God's supplies for saving men.* This amplitude is evidenced (1) *in the provisions of the Gospel.* The message is of widest scope and deepest reach. (2) *In the provisions of the Church.* For the true Church is not local, not even national, but universal. Found on every shore; worships in every language. (3) *In the provision in Heaven itself.* A home? Yes: "a house of many mansions." A city? Yes: lies foursquare, faces every way. Gates ever "open."

Innumerable population. This fact of the amplitude of God's provisions is—

I.—A TRIBUTE TO THE WONDROUS LOVE OF GOD. That love is characterised by (1) *Vastness*. "He will have all men to be saved." (2) *Compassion*. "To that man will He look," &c. (3) *Quenchlessness*. "Love never faileth." "His mercy endureth for ever."

II.—AN ENCOURAGEMENT TO EVERY EARNEST SEEKER FOR RELIGION. There is no hindrance because of limitation in provision. There is a place for every one. Our place (*a*) at the cross; (*b*) in the Church; (*c*) in Heaven, is open for us and empty without us.

III.—AN INSPIRATION FOR EVERY CHRISTIAN WORKER. The hospitality of the Host was not to be thwarted. His servants caught His spirit; not wearied on errands, not shrinking from contact with the lowest, they eagerly cry, as though asking for a yet further mission anywhere and to any people, "Yet there is room." There is life and movement in hearts thus inspired. So there will be in ours if we understand the wondrous amplitude of God's provisions for saving men. Narrow views make feet loiter and lag; broad conceptions rouse enthusiasm and inspire zealous toil.

EDITOR.

Ephesians v. 16.

(*Twentieth Sunday after Trinity.*)

(EPISTLE FOR THE DAY.)

"REDEEMING THE TIME."

THE Revised Version is nearer the exact meaning, "Buying up the opportunity." (See Wordsworth, Alford, Ellicott.) This verse is a continuation of the foregoing exhortations to strictness and consistency in the Christian profession. A well-defined and consistent creed is important, but far more so is conduct that harmonises therewith. Many methods by which this consistency can be secured. Here is one. Wisely use every opportunity. "Like the prudent merchant buy up opportunities" (*c.f.* Ellicott).

I.—DEFINITE OPPORTUNITIES FOR GOOD ARE PRESENTED FOR OUR ACCEPTANCE. Every department of secular and mental life and labour supplies illustrations of this. "There is a tide in the affairs of men, which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune." There are definite opportunities for (*a*) *Getting good*; *e.g.*, *mental good*,—increase of knowledge, breadth of views, purity and depth of thought: *moral*,—strength of character, resistance of evil, so that we "may rise on stepping-stones of our dead selves to higher things—the "sweetness and light" of a growing Christlike character.

(b) *Giving* good; e.g., to the *bodies* of others,—attention to the sick and destitute, listening to and answering “the bitter cry” of the misunderstood, crushed, and ill-used: to the *souls* of others,—taking to them the light and truth of the Gospel of God’s grace, the Father’s love and compassion, &c.

II.—IMPERATIVENESS OF SECURING SUCH OPPORTUNITIES. “Buy them.” Make them your own. Do not dream, play, speculate. Consider what each opportunity (a) *is in itself*, (b) *may produce*; its possibilities are infinite. Note their (1) *Priceless value*. God is lavish in other gifts. Here frugal. One moment at a time to all classes of men. No fully estimating the value of this great gift. (2) *Infinite power* to raise or destroy us. (Set forth examples of the power of time.) (3) *Precarious duration*. How subtle and insatiable the deprecations of time. No certainty as to the length of the stay of any opportunity. (4) *Irreparable* when lost (c.f. Robertson on the “Irreparable Past,” vol. ii.).

“A man’s life is a tower, with a staircase of many steps,
That as he toileth upward crumble
successively behind him.
No going back: the past is an abyss:
no stopping, for the present perisheth;
But ever hastening on, precarious
on the foothold of to-day.”

III.—POSSIBILITY OF SECURING SUCH OPPORTUNITIES. “Buy them.” You *can* do so, for (a) the *needful capital* all possess. Differences in other respects. Equality here. Time is measured to all alike. (b) The *conditions* of purchase are easy and available. Relinquish all false attractions, prejudices, &c. Employ every moment *usefully* and *methodically*. What would be the result of this course of action? Surely consistency of conduct and creed. We *believe* that life is brief. “Buy up,” &c. Then by *conduct* we reduce this faith to a practical matter. We *believe* that life is a probation, and “now” a precious part of it. “Buy up,” &c. Then we should live as those being “proved.” We *believe* there is a supreme Will that alone orders wisely and well. “Buy up,” &c. Then we should submit all our plans to that standard. How many plans would be changed we now form! How we should free ourselves from the “evils” of the present time! What have our opportunities done *for* and *with us*? What is our estimate of our *place*, *character*, and *prospects* in God’s universe.

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Breviaries.

Paul's Psalm of Love. (4) The Patience of Love.

"LOVE SUFFERETH LONG." (*R. V.*)—1 *Cor.* xiii. iv.

THIS word, "suffereth long," or some form of it, is a favourite word with the apostle Paul, and is very often (as here) linked with kindness. Taking it in its connection with "endureth," Archbishop Trench shows how this word, "longsuffering," indicates patience with regard to irritation or wrong brought upon a man by persons; "endurance" indicates patience with regard to calamities arising from *circumstances*. Reserving, therefore, that aspect of patience till we come to the study of the words, "endureth all things," we notice now I.—THE MANIFESTATIONS of this Patience of Love. There may be a world where Love is not strained and taxed as it is here. *Here* there is certainly scope for the manifestation of patience, in (a) the *relationships* of life, (b) the *antagonisms* of life, (c) the *philanthropy* of life. And in all these it is claimed and will be manifested in (1) gentleness, (2) unsuspiciousness, (3) tolerance, (4) forgivingness, (5) continuance. II.—THE BEAUTY of the Patience of Love. Love is (1) *sensitive*, yet patient. Not hard and servile. (2) *Anxious*, yet patient. Eager, not apathetic. III.—THE EXPLANATION of this Patience of Love. Why so forbearing? Because Love cares for the beloved rather than for self. Self is thrown away in the interests of others, the welfare of others. This patience and all the powers of Love are in its self-sacrifice.

EDITOR.

Paul's Psalm of Love. (5) The Kindness of Love.

"LOVE IS KIND." (*R. V.*)—1 *Cor.* xiii. 4.

LIKE the last word, this is one in frequent use by our apostle. He employs it (a) as an *avowal* of his own attitude to men. (b) As an *injunction* to others. (c) As a *description* of God. The thing he here indicates is rather the fragrance of the whole flower of Love than any one of its petals, the lustre of the entire diamond rather than any one of its facets. It is difficult, even in regard to the context, to define the limits of the kindness of Love. Still we dwell on it thus: I.—Kindness a CHARM of the Christian life. The word is a beautiful word, and, as Trench shows, is the expression of a beautiful grace; sometimes being rendered gentleness, goodness—in the Rheims' version—benignity. It is not simply a manner, but a moral loveliness that shines through all manner. II.—Kindness an OBLIGATION of the Christian life. It is not an ornament to be worn at option, but the constant garb of our life, not a work of supererogation, but a necessary, essential, and elemental duty.

EDITOR.

Pulpit Handmaids.

LIGHTS AND SHADOWS OF MINISTERIAL LIFE.*

THE title of my subject is prettily poetical. I need hardly say, therefore, that it has been chosen and framed for me. It must have been put into this shape by some fanciful brother fond of watching the alternations and intersections of light and shade on land and sea, and skilful in tracing the correspondences between natural phenomena and the experiences of human life. I must ask him, however, to excuse my giving it a prosaic setting. Not that I have no admiration for the poetical form in which he has cast it. I do admire it. It is a thing of beauty. But being of a somewhat prosaic order of mind, I am unable to treat the subject in harmony with his poetical description of it. I must, therefore, at the outset state it in terms which shall be more convenient for me, if less attractive to you.

By the lights of ministerial life I presume are meant those things peculiar to ministerial life over which we can rejoice, and which give to it its glory. By the shadows of ministerial life are meant those things peculiar to ministerial life which depress and sadden us. We have to consider these. Let me say, to prevent disappointment, that I shall not deal with those which are peculiar to the life of a few ministers, but with those which are common to all in a greater or less degree.

I.—We take the lights first,—those things which give us joy and lend to our life dignity and glory.

1. And first among these, as standing at the very threshold of our life, I may mention the call of Jesus Christ to the work of the ministry. I speak of a call; for ours is not a profession but, in the most sacred sense, a vocation. It is not what we have chosen ourselves, but what we have been called to by Jesus Christ. If we have any right to the place we fill, we have been called to it by Jesus Christ as truly as Peter and John, who heard His summons on the shore of the sea of Galilee, or Paul, who was startled by His voice and blinded by the brilliant blaze of His glory on the road to Damascus. If we do not feel that we have received this call,—feel it as at once a binding power on the conscience and a constraining

* This paper was read at a Conference of Past and Present Students of the Bristol Theological Institute, on September 16th.

force in the heart,—we have no more right to exercise the functions of the ministry than Uzziah had to assume the functions of an Aaronic priest. If, on the other hand, this call has come to us with this double attestation,—the conviction of duty and the constraint of love,—we have not only a *right* to be in the ministry, but we cannot leave it except under the condemnation of God. We may make no pretension to be in the direct line of the apostolic succession, as that term is understood by ecclesiastics of the High Church school ; we may not have been set apart to the work of the ministry by episcopal or archiepiscopal ordination ; we may have received no license to preach from any legal or ecclesiastical, personal or collective, authority ; we may not have sat at the feet of any theological Rabbi, to be instructed in Christian dogmatics, or have been taught to construct sermons according to approved homiletical rules ; we may never appear in clerical costume out of the pulpit, or in professional robes and badges in it ; we may know nothing of the “original tongues,” and be several removes from perfect masters of verbal expression even in our own ; but if we feel that neither our conscience, nor our heart, can be satisfied unless we are what Paul calls “ambassadors on behalf of Christ,” we are as much called to be ministers of Jesus Christ as any priest or prelate, primate or apostle.

And what is it we are called to do ? What is our work ? The answer is found in the words of Jesus Christ : “The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.” To save the lost, principally through the preaching of the Gospel, is *our* work, as it was His. And when we use the word “save,” we attach to it a deeper meaning than is sometimes given to it. We do not mean by it being preserved from the horrors of a local hell, and elevated to the glories of a local heaven. That is a very inadequate, unworthy, vulgar, unscriptural conception of salvation. If that were all it meant, the Son of God was chargeable with a terribly wasteful expenditure of love and of labour, of suffering and of sorrow. But that is NOT all. The real hell is not local, but conditional. The true heaven is not one where beautiful sights and sweet sounds minister continuously to sensuous delight. Milton’s Satan, in one of his reflective moods, says, “Which way I fly is hell ; myself am hell.” Yes, that is it. Not *where* a man is, but *what* he is, makes either his heaven or his hell. It is not local and outward, but personal and inward. If guilt cloud his conscience, and defilement stain his spirit, and his soul be the scene of tumultuous and ungoverned passions, and his heart be the seat of a cankerous earthliness which is insidiously eating its way to the very centre

of his spiritual being, he is in a hell which is unspeakably fearful. And that is the condition of multitudes to-day. To save men from such a hell as that, and to raise them to a heaven which is its antithesis, is our work. "What are these which are arrayed in white robes, and whence come they? . . . These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His Temple. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." To raise men to *that* is our work. Can any work be compared to that for beneficence, and grandeur, and permanence? Can the work of artist, or scientist, or barrister, or judge, or merchant, or statesman, or king, be for a moment brought into comparison with it. Without hesitation we say, no. Useful though the work of each may be, it is a mere trifle in comparison with that which touches man at the very centre and fountain of his being, and blesses him for ever. We, therefore, need not be ashamed in the presence of any man, however high in station he may be, and whatever title he may bear. We may work in obscure spheres, and with the slenderest and most inconvenient material recompense, as some of us do; but we are doing what the Son of God came from Heaven to do,—saving the lost,—and there can be nothing equal in importance to that. I think, brethren, if we looked at our work in this light more frequently than we do, we should not go through the world, as the manner of some is, with a manner which seems like a sort of semi-apology for being in it; we should lift up our heads, not proudly but boldly, among men, and glory that to us the unequalled honour has been given to preach the Gospel of the grace of God.

2. Another thing which I may place among the lights of our life is the pleasure found in our work. Our special function is to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ. Those are pre-eminently riches of love;—love kindled by no contemplation of moral beauty in man, but purely spontaneous,—love which no degree of degradation and deformity in man can repel,—love which found its most marvellous and moving manifestation in the obedience of the Divine One to the death of the cross,—love which follows man with unconquerable persistency and unutterable tenderness through all the windings of his wicked and wayward will, in this and in all ages,—love which is "a vast unfathomable sea, where all our thoughts are drowned." To proclaim this love to man is our chief

work. Other subjects, it is true, have to be dealt with ; but this is the central one, and like the sun among the planets, it gives light and warmth to them all. In preaching this great central truth we often find a joy which no words can adequately describe. The enjoyment found in poetry, in music, in science, in art, in literature, in scenery, in society, is superficial and feeble in comparison. We cannot scale the heights, and sound the depths, and sweep with our thought the whole round and range of the great theme, it is true. As there are star-depths immeasurably beyond the range of the most powerful telescope, so when our thought, inspired by the grandeur of the theme, has reached its utmost bounds, there are still infinite amplitudes of this grand truth beyond us. But partial as our apprehension of it is and must be, when that apprehension is intensely realistic, when we feel it to be true for ourselves and each of the sin-smitten souls whom we address ; and when we realise somewhat the eternal weight of glory which that infinite and ceaselessly operative love will work out for us and for them in the coming ages, we know a joy which is "unspeakable and full of glory." I do not know what the rapture of the poet may be in the seasons of his highest inspiration : I do not know what the rapture of the artist may be when pictures of ideal loveliness stand out before his creative imagination : I do not know what the rapture of the musician may be when symphonies of unutterable sweetness or grandeur are being created in the silence of his study, or heard in the presence of thousands of thrilled auditors swayed by its power as the heaving corn by the wind : I do not know what the rapture of the scientist may be when a great discovery crowns the laborious investigations of years. But be it what it may, I cannot conceive it to be equal to that which the preacher feels when he vividly realises the love of God to the weary and wandering souls to whom he proclaims it. And, personally, I have no desire to exchange my experience for theirs. And when I speak thus for myself, I speak, I am sure, for most of you, who often say, with Pauline emphasis and ecstasy, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

But we find high enjoyment not merely in the act of preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ, but in the knowledge of the good which Christ does through us. Here, for example, is a man whom we have led to rejoice in the great love which is the theme of our preaching and the glory of our life ; there is another to whom we have made the Bible a new book ; here is one whom we have rescued from the perplexity of doubt ; there another whom we have delivered from the paralysis and

anguish of despair ; here is one whom we have solaced and made to sing in the day of his adversity ; there another whom we have saved from a withering worldliness in the time of his prosperity. Some we have guided through the dark valley by the light of the Gospel carried to them in their last hours, for we have heard the whispers of faith and seen the glory of the spirit shine through the face, like light through translucent marble ; others, with darkened homes and desolated hearts, we have helped and healed with the consolations of the Christian Hope. This is helping men in the highest possible sense. It is not like giving them bread when hungry, or clothing them when in rags. Even this brings joy, as every generous-hearted and open-handed man knows. But in doing this we help men only for a season ; while in carrying the light and music, the peace and joy of the Gospel into their hearts and lives, we are improving the *men*, not their circumstances ; we are blessing them, not for a few fleeting years, but for the “ages of the ages” (*εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων*). In the knowledge of this there is a pleasure which no man can put into words, and which every man must feel to understand. The pleasure of the philanthropist who knows that he has alleviated the sufferings of men, and brought them a large measure of physical comfort is not small. But we are sure that the pleasure of the man who brings the sunshine and song of a realised Gospel into the hearts and homes of men, is of a far higher order as the work is of a loftier and more abiding nature. There cannot be a higher pleasure than this, and this we all have in varying degrees.

3. Another thing which I may place among the lights of ministerial life is the large opportunity we have for moral and spiritual improvement. It is said that in the life of a minister there is a strong and perilous tendency to mere officialism, and to a perfunctory discharge of the most sacred duties. That is no doubt true. We all feel it more or less, some of us keenly at times. Some ministers, alas, are pitiful examples of this stream of tendency, have frozen into hard fact. The living man, whose voice once quivered with emotion, whose words were quick with the life of the Spirit of God, and luminous with light from heaven, has degenerated into a lifeless official, mechanically performing the outward duties of his office. His manner is possibly that of a cultured gentleman, his voice is rich and melodious, his diction is polished and brilliant, or solid and set as a piece of masonry inlaid with cement, his sermons are elaborated with the utmost care, his teaching is stainlessly orthodox, without heretical “spot or wrinkle or any such thing” ; and yet as we listen to him we

feel there is no touch and throb and thrill of life. We see and hear him in the pulpit, but we do not feel him in the pew. He is something like the stone or marble figures, which we sometimes see in the corridors of large buildings, holding brilliant lamps in their hands, but having none within them. The proper place for the light in the case of this ornamental statuary is, probably, in the hand; but in the case of the preacher it should be not in the hand only but in the heart, shooting and shining through him upon the darkened souls before him. This peril of perfunctoriness is doubtless present with us all. But while this is so, we nevertheless have opportunities for improvement in the Christian life greater than most other men. If we have only the same amount of sincerity and earnestness as other Christian men, we certainly ought to surpass them in the fulness and force of our Christian life. The Word of God is acknowledged by us all to be one of the chief means of promoting the growth of the Christian character. What is said of this Word in the Scriptures themselves sufficiently justifies this opinion, and, indeed, has created it. According to those Scriptures the Word of God is quick and powerful. This a regenerative force. It is spirit and life. This a light unto men's feet and a lamp unto their path. It converts the soul; it makes the simple wise; it rejoices the heart. More to be desired is it than gold, yea than much fine gold; sweeter than honey or the honeycomb. Such are some of the descriptions of the Word of God in the Bible itself. The rich indwelling of that Word cannot fail to give vitality and vigour, beauty and breadth to character. And what men have the opportunities for possessing themselves of that Word as we? Most other Christian men can give it only a few hours' attention a week. Even then the mind is so pre-occupied and jaded with secular solitudes that it is far from easy to fix the thought steadily upon it. And when there is neither this pre-occupation, or mental and bodily weariness which secular anxieties and activities induce, they have not usually the helps to study it which we have, and many of them have not the intellectual aptitude which training has given to us. We, however, are handling that Word from day to day through many successive years. We come fresh to it every morning. We have the silence and seclusion of the study in which to question and brood over it. We have at hand critical and exegetical aids to enable us to break deeply into that Word and work the inexhaustible mines of wealth which are unquestionably there. I know there is a danger of handling that Word as mere critics, and exegetes, and intellectualists. But unless we woefully forget the great object of our study of the Word,

viz., the promotion of the life of God in the souls of men,—and when we have forgotten that it is high time we left the work to which we were called,—this daily, habitual, sustained study of the Word of God cannot fail to be an unspeakable spiritual advantage to us,—an advantage which other Christian men do not and cannot enjoy in anything like the same degree.

Then, again, there is another advantage which we enjoy for which many men would be devoutly thankful. I refer to the extreme quiet of our lives as compared with that of most business men. It is not quite so idyllically peaceful as a writer in the *Christian World* recently represented it to be ; but without doubt it presents, in this respect, a striking contrast to the life of the business men of our age. The wheels of the world's commerce were never whirling with such rapidity as they are to-day. With telegraph above the waters, and cablegraph under the waters, and steam and machinery hissing and clanging wherever we turn, men are driving onwards with unprecedented speed. Hot and panting haste is seen everywhere. In some cases this is no doubt a guilty haste, the outcome of an eager desire to grow rich, or to live with as much ostentatious grandeur as others. But in many cases it seems to be the inevitable outcome of the conditions of our modern life. It is unnecessary to say that there is peril to the Christian character in this. But from this, whatever may be its extent, we are free. We are in the study, in the pulpit, in the prayer meeting, at the bedside of the sick or the dying, engaged in that which pertains specially to the interests of the soul and eternity, while other men are hustled and hurried to and fro in the crowded places of the world's competitive commerce. This is an undoubted advantage to us ; and if we have only ordinary sincerity and earnestness, we, under these favourable conditions, ought to have—as we need to have—a richer life, a more rounded character, a heavenlier spirit than the men to whom we minister. How far this is the case with us, perhaps God only knows ; but certainly this unequalled opportunity for the cultivation and attainment of Christlikeness of life and character is one of the bright things in our ministerial life, for which we cannot be too thankful to Him who called us to it.

There are two or three other things upon which I intended to dwell on this part of our subject, viz., the esteem and affection in which the minister, as such, is held by the people ; and the intellectual improvement which results from the studious life which we necessarily live if we do our work with fidelity. But these I must pass over with the mere mention of them, and proceed briefly to consider—

II.—The Shadows of Ministerial Life.

1. Among these I may place our limited success in leading men to Christ. I have spoken of the joy which we find when success in this form attends our work, and all that I have said is true. But there is another side. It is a well-known fact that the intenser the light the darker is the shadow cast by it. In like manner, the greater the joy of leading men to Christ, the greater is the grief when we fail, or seem to fail, in this. And how few, comparatively, we lead to Christ out of the many who hear us from year to year! In spite of all we can do, men turn away from Christ the light and go off into the "blackness of darkness." "Who hath believed our report"? is a question which some of us often ask with tearful eyes, and aching hearts, and in tones of deepest despondency. Some will say, perhaps, that this is our own fault. They do say it. They say if we were more fervent, or more faithful, or more simple, or more prayerful, the occasion for this question would not exist. Perhaps this is a partial explanation of a part of our failure. I do not wish to say that it is not. God forbid that I should say a word that would in any measure weaken our sense of responsibility. I would rather be dumb than utter a word which should have that mischievous effect. If we were all that we should be, if we did all that we could do, and if we did it in the wisest and most winsome way possible to us, we should be more successful probably than we are. And it is our duty to examine ourselves keenly and carefully on this point. But this short and easy method of accounting for our comparative failure in this part of our work is not perfectly satisfactory. It is often, indeed, outrageously unjust and pitilessly cruel. Did not prophets complain of this same thing? Did not apostles bewail this? Does not God, again and again, utter this complaint in the Old Testament? Did not Jesus Christ weep bitterly over His failure in this very particular? Were prophets and apostles lacking in zeal? Were God and His Son deficient in fervour, in tenderness, in wisdom, in fidelity? Who dares say, yea to such questions? And yet they all lamented that in spite of what they wished and worked to accomplish, men went their way to doom. But be the true explanation what it may, there is the fact. And if I can speak for others from what I feel myself, that is one of the deepest shadows in our life. At times the thought of it brings me positive anguish. Occasionally such a sense of utter impotence and uselessness seizes me that I am ready to abandon my work in sheer despair. There are seasons too, when from this cause my faith in the Gospel as a means of enlightening and saving the world, suffers a complete eclipse. Fortu-

nately, like a lunar or solar eclipse, it is but brief. The shadow passes from the face of the Sun of Righteousness, and I stand again rejoicing in the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. I do not know how far my experience harmonises with that of others; but such it is, even if it is peculiar to myself, and my brethren must think of it just what they will. I hardly think, however, from the tone of some of the prayers which I heard this morning, that in this I stand quite alone. There are others who stand with me in this shadow. In this shadow, too, we stand with Him who, on Olivet, wept over the city which first rejected His words and then took away His life.

2. Another shadow in ministerial life is caused by the inactivity of so many able men in our Churches. It is profoundly saddening to look over our congregations and see the number of men and women who are able to work for Christ, but are doing nothing. Some of the most educated and wealthy in our Churches are the least useful. A few are personally active it is true, but the greater part do nothing. They *think* they do something. And why? Because they *give* something. But there is a fundamental error in this thinking. Paul, in one of his epistles, uses the words, "I will gladly spend and be spent for you." These people can say the first, but not the second. They will *spend* with some approach to apostolic cheerfulness, but they will not *be spent*. They will give money but not manhood. They will pay for other people's working, but they won't work themselves. With all their education they do not understand the Gospel of work. In the religious world they are mere consumers. They do not produce, to use the words of Carlyle, "the pitifullest infinitesimal fraction of a product." I have been reading a remarkable book lately, entitled "Natural Law in the Spiritual World." There are two chapters in it bearing the titles, "Semi-Parasitism," and "Parasitism." It would be well for each of us, not merely to read this book ourselves, but to put it into the hands of these capable indolents in our Churches, and request that they would deeply study these two chapters. If, after that, they did not change, their case is utterly hopeless. But this indolent, parasitic life marks not only some of the wealthy and best educated in our Churches, but many besides. There is work to be done, but it cannot be done because these capable but indolent Christians will let their talent rust, or rot, rather than use it in helpful service. This is a permanent and deep shadow in our life as ministers of Jesus Christ, anxious to further His kingdom.

3. The want of cordial interest in one another which marks our

churches is another shadow in our life. According to the New Testament associated Christians are brethren ; they constitute one family ; they are "members one of another." It is very delightful to study this picture of Christians in the New Testament. But when we turn away from the book and look at the churches, we know what a contrast between the Scripture representation and the reality ! I do not now refer to the unseemly contentions which create confusion and chaos in our churches, shatter public confidence in them, and cripple the usefulness of faithful and earnest ministers for many a weary year. I refer rather to the indifference to one another which characterises associated Christians. "Am I my brother's keeper?" expresses the pervading spirit in not a few places. The rich and educated stand aloof in proud isolation from the poor and uncultured. Those who have not been "introduced," as it is called, feel bound by the rigid rules of conventional etiquette not to speak to one another, forgetting that the relation into which they are brought by a common union with Christ creates a law to which this merely conventional regulation should be subordinate, and before which it should give way. How rare is it for the sick and the sad to be visited by any other person than the pastor ! No man seems to care for them except the man whose visits cannot be altogether regarded as prompted by personal interest, but dictated in part by a sense of official duty. I suppose we have all heard complaints from those who in times of sickness and sorrow were neglected by their fellow church members. Equally frequent, and occasionally somewhat bitter, have been the complaints from persons, humble in station, who consider themselves to be slighted by those above them in the social scale. Perhaps those who complain thus are not wholly free from fault. They may be indifferent to others, as others are to them. The poor, too, sometimes draw off from the rich, if the rich sometimes proudly stand aloof from the poor. But even admitting this, there can be no doubt that there is a lamentable lack of interest in one another on the part of the members of our churches who say, "One is our Master, even Christ, and all we are brethren." This destroys much of the value of church life, it seriously weakens the influence and attractiveness of the church to those outside, and greatly hinders the usefulness of the minister and the progress of the kingdom of Christ. "That they may be perfect in one, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me." So Christ prays. The world's faith in the Divine commission of Jesus depends in part it would seem upon the love and harmony of Christians. If so, how much of the unbelief of the world is traceable to the coldness or the con-

tentiousness of those who are professedly anxious to bring it to faith in Christ.

4. Another shadow in our life is caused by our fidelity. "Am I become your enemy because I tell you the truth?" asks Paul of the Corinthians. They plainly thought him such, though their truest and tenderest friend. The same question often leaps to our lips; for men become hostile to us because we speak the truth. Sometimes this may arise, not from the truth we speak, but from our way of speaking it. There is a want of wisdom and winsomeness in us. The pungency and pugnacity of our speech excite antagonism and bitterness. But this is not always the explanation. The truth we speak cuts directly across the lines of men's loves and lives. It disturbs their complacency. It is like caustic to the flesh. It carries condemnation into their hearts. When this is the case one of two things will happen: either they will be grieved for their sin, or they will be indignant with the man through whose utterance the sense of it has been created; they will either seek to harmonise their lives with the truth, or they will hate the man who forces home upon them the discordance between the two. It would be easy to avoid all this. We might do it by always speaking "comfortably to Jerusalem," as though men needed only a ministry of consolation; by discussing truth in the abstract, and never pointing out the practical applications of it; by depriving our deliverances of point and power through a skilful use of circumlocutory and euphemistic speech. But we must not do this. Prophets did not; apostles did not; Christ did not; and we dare not. Hence we must take the consequences of our fidelity, even if it is, as in Christ's case, crucifixion.

There are many other shadows besides these, but we have not time even to name them. But however many they may be, the lights exceed them. We have more, far more to be grateful for than to complain over; more occasion to sing than sigh, to laugh than to mourn. Our evils, as we misname them, may be many, but our blessings are "a great multitude which no man can number"; though it would do us good sometimes if we would attempt the impossible,—count the innumerable.

I would close by reminding you, brethren, and myself, of one more shadow,—a genial, protective, abiding shadow, what the Scriptures call the "shadow of God's wings." In that shadow let us make our refuge until all calamities be overpast.

STREET.

JOHN TAYLOR.

HOME MISSIONS IN SOUTH WALES.

THE following paper was read at the Annual Meeting held at Llandilo in the spring of this year. Some friends who heard it read subsequently to that meeting, urged the writer to send it to the *Homilist*; partly, because that serial is read by many in Wales, and, partly, because of the historic associations which it recalls as related to Free Christianity, and to some of its renowned preachers of this century in South Wales.

HOME MISSION WORK IN SOUTH WALES.

Our records of memorable events, embracing everything that is common to us as a nation, and more particularly the religious events of our country, are full of interest to us. We read them and think of them in our quiet hours. They are sometimes depressing, and even humiliating; but they are oftener refreshing, invigorating, and inspiring. History is a bracing study. Our minds, long ago, without the companionship of history, would have become very empty, dwarfed, quite unfit for the work of our own day. Contemporaneous history is doubly interesting and instructive. We consider this morning, not the "days of old and the years of ancient times," but our own time—at any rate, times so very near to us that we may call them our own. In this charming district of our own beloved Cambria, a locality which is associated with the names of one or two of the richest and sweetest poetical writers in the English tongue, we are assembled this morning in solemn, earnest, and loving conference to receive and to give, to exchange thoughts and to suggest plans which all relate to the kingdom of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in our own native land. We feel that we can sing with all our hearts the words of that venerable, eloquent, learned, and devoted servant of God, Dr. W. L. Alexander, of Edinburgh—

"We meet to seek in faith and zeal,
The brethren's good, the Church's weal:
O whilst for Zion's cause we stand,
May Zion's King be near at hand."

A passing reference to Llandilo and its neighbourhood may be excused on the ground of historic associations. Golden Grove is wedded to the name of Jeremy Taylor; and his "Marriage Ring," composed there, will live in the esteem of pure and refined minds as long as the world stands. The

only disturbing element in his association with Golden Grove is that in his catechism for children, under the name of "Golden Grove," some hard words of his in his preface, about the "Independents," sent him to prison, at Cardigan, for a short time. The Independents at that time, were, no more than Churchmen, perfect in their knowledge of religious liberty, nor are they now. But we are seeking to be so. Jeremy Taylor's genius and piety were appreciated by the political party then in power, and they were not hard upon him. One of the finest passages in his writings refers to this period. "In the great storm," he says, "which dashed the vessel of the Church all in pieces, I had been cast on the coast of Wales, and in a little boat thought to have enjoyed that rest and quietness which in England, in a far greater, I could not hope for. Here I cast anchor, and thinking to ride safely, the storm followed me with so impetuous violence that it broke a cable, and I lost my anchor. And here again I was exposed to the mercy of the sea and the gentleness of an element that could neither distinguish things nor persons; and but that He that stilleth the raging of the sea, and the noise of His waves, and the madness of His people, had provided a plank for me, I had been lost to all the opportunities of content or study; but I know not whether I have been more preserved by the courtesies of my friends or the gentleness and mercies of a noble enemy." John Dyer, a Welshman, and a native of this neighbourhood, and a clergyman of the Established Church, was far less gifted than the genius of Golden Grove, but his exquisitely sweet poem, "Grongar Hill," helps our faculty for appreciating what is so beautiful in the handiworks of our God in this locality.

"Grongar Hill invites my song,
Draw the landscape bright and strong."

Our fathers often met for such a purpose as ours is this morning, and we are not ignorant of the work which they did through the blessing of Almighty God. We remember this with joy and thanksgiving. "Our fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever?" No; their work is done, they rest in heaven, "they summer high in bliss upon the hills of God." We are in the field, and we have entered into their labours. If I have any strong desire in my soul, it is that we may prove ourselves worthy to be in this hallowed succession, and *that* again by our being possessed by the spirit of our fathers, which was certainly that of entire consecration to the work of their Divine Master and Redeemer. I know not the month nor the day when the "South Wales English Congre-

gational Society" was formed. It may not be registered in any calendar, but I fancy that its record is on high; I know, however, that it was in the year 1860. Its run has been just twenty-four years. In alliance with its origin, the name of John Davies, of Cardiff, will be held in affectionate esteem. The names also of some English brethren, both clerical and lay, will be associated with it by fragrant memories, and the honoured brethren who now bear its main burdens have much to cheer them in the work which God has enabled them to accomplish in those twenty-four years. Some fifty or more churches and congregations have been partly fostered and partly founded in that period, for the spiritual benefit of the English-speaking population of South Wales. These home mission aided churches to-day are far, very far, from being what we desire. And churches which are not aided are just in the same condition. We live and make some small progress, and that is all! We are not satisfied with this. It would show a low, faint sense of the greatness of our work and responsibility if we could look complacently into each others faces this morning and congratulate one another for the work we have done and for the work we are doing. Rather we would thank God for what *He* has done in spite of our lukewarmness, and ask Him to remind us, in His own gracious way, that "there is much land yet to be possessed." We give Him thanks, moreover, for such figures as these—that in our home mission aided churches we have 2,760 members, that the number of our adherents (inclusive of members and children) is at least 5,520, that we have in these Sunday schools 4,451 scholars and 464 teachers, and that these home mission churches in the last year raised for all purposes the sum of £3,790 11s. 7d. It is only four years since we became allied with the Congregational Church-Aid and Home Missionary Society. For my own part, although I may be inclined to question the wisdom of centralization in the action of free churches, I confess that in this particular case, so far, I rejoice in the absorption of our county associations in the South Wales Society, and that this association has swallowed us all up. I rejoice in this absorption partly for this reason—that it gives to outsiders a public, practical expression of the true character of Independency. In the days of hot sectarian conflicts we were familiar enough with the taunt, "You are a rope of sand. You have no cohesion. You are at the mercy of a headstrong minister, or of a still more headstrong deacon, who with his followers is determined to have the upper hand." But, thank God, this is not true. Our ecclesiastical system is not a cold, selfish isolation, but a religious administration

which secures perfect freedom on the part of our churches, and in conjunction with the most hearty co-operation of the entire body corporate. "Distinct as the billows, yet one as the sea." It would be an interesting item of information, but I am sure that it is one which is quite out of our reach, if we could tell in a round sum all that has been done for us, as Welsh Independents, in the way of pecuniary assistance by our English friends of the same common faith and order during the last, say, 100 years. This would a tale unfold, and cement us more than ever to our Saxon brethren; although, indeed, in Wales, the additional motive could hardly make the bond stronger than it is. The Irish people hate the "Sasnach," but that spirit has never struck its root into the heart of the Welsh people. Our nationality, may I say, will never be obliterated, not so long as our dear old mountains cast their shadows across our path; not so long as our dear mother-tongue remains to cheer us in our sombre moments; but Saxon invasions and Saxon oppressions, almost as odious as any that the Irish recount to nurse their spirit of revenge, are forgiven and forgotten here, because Wales has had its peculiar Sunday schools and its open Bible, whose authority binds us to forgive and forget; whereas, in Ireland, the masses have no Bible at all, and, therefore, its disloyalty, its deeds of revenge, and its delight in assassinating the innocent. Where has there been loyalty more reliable and steadfast than among the free Churches of Wales? Our poverty as Welsh Nonconformists, and our outside ecclesiastical burdens and hindrances, will continue for some time yet to compel us to look to England for its Christian generosity, and, our common work will prompt the strong to help the weak. This is a Divine spirit, and it will not cease to be. It would be impossible for me at this hour even to glance over the entire area of South Wales, in order to record the details of its home mission work among ourselves and in the English tongue. I am familiar only with a very limited sphere, and even of that I know but very little. Beginning in Carmarthenshire and running along the south coast of Pembrokeshire, it is most interesting to observe that our honoured fathers, the pastors of our strong Welsh churches, were thoroughly possessed by the missionary spirit. Their success in their own districts and in their own tongue was truly apostolic. This was no wonder, for they were men whose souls were cast in the apostolic mould. They were singularly gifted, not only intellectually and spiritually, but also above their humbler brethren, in their bi-lingual capacity as well as in their personal material resources. In their days English preaching labour was a work that could have been done only by a few. Welsh ministers

could have done nothing more than pity the benighted condition of their countrymen in the English fag ends of their country. In our days there are but few of our brethren who are not as efficient in the one tongue as in the other. It, therefore, lay as the "burden of the Lord" on such men as Richard Morgan, of Henllan, Morgan Jones, Trelech, and others, to itinerate in the intervals of their own Welsh Sunday work at home into the "Little England beyond Wales," to these "Hwntws," as we South Wales people are called by our proud northerners, to preach the Gospel where they could get an audience—in farm-houses, in lowly cottages, and in the open air,—and in forming apostolic churches in such places as Laugharne, Amroth, Saundersfoot, Tenby, Lamphey, Pembroke, and other places. They were the founders of our churches in these districts. I say "founders" in the sense of local habitation and a name, in the sense of a permanent settlement. Dr. Rees tells us that, so far back as 1691, such was the zeal of a good minister at Haverfordwest, that he made his parish to stretch from the Green, Haverfordwest, to Pembroke in the south, and to Trefgarn in the north-west; and that he built a chapel at Pembroke. This honoured brother, Thomas Davies, left his mantle to another Davies, who carried on the work till the year 1743. This "Davidian" family are a noble race. Then came a change in the removal of active agency, and the work of years in Pembroke and the neighbourhood became enfeebled and almost ceased to be, until the new and famous travelling preachers took it up again, assisted by men whose names are held in admiration by us to this day. Meyler, of Rhosycaeraid, and Griffiths, of Glandwr, are household names. New men now came to the front. Evans, of St. Florence, Harries, of Pembroke, Thomas,* of Sardis (himself a convert of the travelling preachers, Morgan and Jones), who, in his turn, incessantly laboured in every village and hamlet in South Pembroke, often preaching four times on the Lord's Day, passing rich, I suppose, through all his ministerial life on £50 a year. Warlow, of Milford, and Warr and Bulmer, of Haverfordwest, and two or three singularly gifted lay preachers, were efficient helpers of this home mission work. Some of the older people in my neighbourhood speak of the spiritual gifts of one

* The Rev. W. Thomas, of Sardis, was the father of the Rev. Doctor David Thomas, and grandfather of the present Editor of the *Homilist*. He was a man of singular preaching power, and one of the hardest workers in South Wales. His labour was literally a labour of love, for his entire ministry was almost gratuitous. He was a burden to no one, but laboured with his own hands for his family and for the public.

or two lay preachers with unbounded admiration. The church of which I am pastor is one of the fruits of these home missionary activities of Welsh ministers for the spiritual benefit of their English-speaking countrymen. The Tenby church is an offshoot and legitimate daughter of the church at St. Florence. If anything is seen in the formation of these churches, which are now willing, liberal helpers of weaker ones, it is the hand of the Lord. In the line of St. Florence, Tenby is related to the church at Henllan. For ages that church has been a sort of Jerusalem in South Wales, the Goshen of pure religion in its outward form of Independent Nonconformity. Its initiation is associated with the labours of our early Puritans. The earnest, learned, and eloquent Stephen Hughes, of Myddim, was a brilliant star in the firmament of the Welsh Church under the Commonwealth, and there is reason to believe that to him, and to one or two other brethren hardly less distinguished, may be ascribed the honour of planting the Church at Henllan. An ancestor of our beloved brother, Professor Morgan, in his early days, was a pupil of the Rector of St. Florence. The spiritual destitution of the village deeply impressed his young mind. On his return home, the condition of St. Florence became a household theme. It reached the church at Henllan. A fresh interest in this locality was awakened in the mind of the pastor and his deacons. Frequent visits to St. Florence and the neighbourhood were made by Mr. Morgan and Mr. Jones, of Trelech. These resulted in the erection of a chapel. Mr. Morgan, of Forge, and Mr. Thomas, Gwyndy, as the representatives of the church at Henllan, got the timber work of the chapel made ready at Henllan, and it was conveyed to St. Florence on their own carts. The old chapel is still there, and used on special occasions. "The stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it"—but not, as of old, to pronounce a woe, but a blessing, on the builders. Meyler, of Rhosycaeraid, Davies, of Bethlem, and Griffiths, of Glandwr, followed up this work of regular preaching at St. Florence, until, in 1804, Benjamin Evans, from Carmarthen College, settled there. This same Benjamin Evans, a man of great weight of character, was most laborious and self-denying, and the founder, properly, of the church in Tenby, as well as its minister for many years in conjunction with the Church at St. Florence. Why do I name these facts, except to show that our home mission to the English-speaking people of South Wales is not a new thing? My concern is—and I am sure that this is the prevailing concern among us—that the spirit of our honoured fathers should possess us, and that we should honour their memory and work in

a measure proportionate to the necessities of our own times. We have no lack of men, and we thank God that the men we have, and who are coming to the front, and who are entering into our labours, are men of greater ability and of suitability for the demands of this age than we are ourselves. Everything around us is cheering, provided that we all yearn to be baptized with the spirit of our Lord, with the spirit of His apostles, with the spirit of our own early forefathers, and, let me add, with the spirit of our own immediate fathers in the ranks of Independent Nonconformity. If our work for our Master in our mother tongue is to be curtailed, and a moiety of it given to another language, let it be done as unto the Lord: not grudgingly, but cheerfully, for He loveth a cheerful giver. But in the transition—although some of our national religious eccentricities in speech and in outward modes of religious emotional expression may have to be reluctantly surrendered—I trust, however difficult it may seem to be, that the fire, and the zeal, and the life ascribed to our nation in the service of our Redeemer may not be lost. I beseech you, my brethren in the ministry (and I need the exhortation fully as much as you do), to endeavour to set an example to your flocks, of zeal for the extension of the kingdom of Christ. And I beseech you, brethren, who are aided by this society, to see to it that its aid is not suffered to paralyze the energies of your people, by inducing them to ask for help when they themselves do next to nothing, but rather that outside helpers may be instruments in God's hand to bring out your strength. Although I have said nothing about the place of prayer in and with our work, the omission will not be put down to a faint sense of its priceless value, or to forgetfulness of it. My few and feeble words have been about work—work personal and united—work involving the essential accompaniment of giving our money to the treasury of our Lord. “God helps them who help themselves.” That is not in the written Bible, but it is in the unwritten Bible of the conscience and the heart. Working and praying go together in our ethics and in our religion. And the Lord be with us all.

TENBY.

JOHN LEWIS.



Suggestions for Science Parables.

All material Nature is but a parable of spiritual realities.

"Two worlds are our's, 'tis only sin
Forbids us to descry,
The mystic Earth and Heaven within,
Clear as the sea or sky."

FRUITS AND AUTUMNAL DAYS.

FLOWERS AND FRUITS.—"Afore the harvest, when the bud is perfect" (Isaiah xviii. 5). "Last in the order of preparation for the fruit comes *the glow and the grace of the flower*. When this makes its appearance, it is the aurora of the plant's fecundity. . . . Therefore the queenly and incomparable hues; therefore the odours that seem breath inherited from Eden; therefore the forms and outlines before which the mathematician is still a child. We might be sure that some great event was near at hand, did experience not assure us that fruit would follow all this outlay, since grandeur of announcement in nature is always prophetic of something opulent to follow." Illustrations in the moral world abound, *e.g.*, the aged Simeon, Paul.

FRUIT-BEARING THE END OF LIFE.—"Maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater" (Isaiah lv. 10). "The fruit of the plant is the portion to the development of which all activities have been dedicated. The root, the leaf, the flower, have all wrought to the furtherance of this grand intention." Isaiah says of Israel (Ezekiel xvii. 8), "It was planted in a good soil by great waters, that it might bear fruit, that it might be a goodly vine."

FRUITAGE AND DISCIPLINE.—"He shall cut off the sprigs with pruning hooks" (Isaiah xviii. 5). "It is not *dying* that is dreadful, or to be looked on with dismay, but dying without having

lived,—i.e., without having lived to some good purpose. Plants under cultivation are often reluctant to produce blossoms. Year after year they unfold abundance of green leaves, and as 'foliage plants' command our admiration; but we are never gratified with the sight of a flower. The plan generally adopted with such plants is to starve them in some way; checking the exuberance of growth, alarming them, as it were, with the fear of being destroyed, when they forthwith make efforts to produce flowers, so that they may have at least a representative of their race." The great Teacher taught, "Every branch that beareth fruit, He *purgeth* it, that it may bring forth more fruit" (John xv. 2). Chastening "yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby" (Hebrews xii. 11).

FRUIT SEED-BEARING.—"The tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind" (Genesis i. 12). "*Inside the fruit is the seed.*" This is the last grand and crowning effort of the plant's existence, for in the seed lies wrapped the future one. Perhaps a mere speck, yet capable of unfolding by degrees and absorbing from the earth and the atmosphere that marvellous sustenance which, invisible to our eyes, shall yet be wrought into wood and sap, and built into great boughs and branches, till a living pillar is erected that shall withstand the shock of ages." In the Scriptures we read, "His seed remaineth in him" (1 John iii. 9), "for none of us liveth or dieth to himself" (Romans xiv. 7).

BRISTOL THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE. T. BROUGHTON KNIGHT.



Selected Acorns from Stalwart Oaks.

“The smallest living *acorn* is fit to be the parent of *oak-trees* without end.”
—*Carlyle*.

THE CLAIMS OF HEAVEN AND OF EARTH.—“The planets in the heavens have a two-fold motion—in their orbits and on their axes; the one motion not interfering, but carried on in perfect harmony with the other. So must it be that man’s two-fold activities round the heavenly and the earthly centre, disturb not, nor jar with, each other.”—*Dr. Caird*.

SEEKING EARTHLY THINGS.—“A Nebuchadnezzar curse that sends us to grass like oxen; whereas man’s use and function is to be the witness of the glory of God, whatsoever enables us to fulfil this function is, in the pure and first sense of the word, useful to us.”—*Ruskin*.

GRANDILOQUENT PREACHING.—“Gibbon’s style is too uniform, he writes in the same flowing and pompous style on every subject. He is like Christie, the auctioneer, who says as much in praise of a ribbon as of a Raphael.”—*Professor Porson*.

THE FACULTY OF MEMORY.—“The ideas, as well as the children of our youth, often die before us, and our minds represent to us those tombs to which we are approaching, where although the brass and the marble remain, yet the inscriptions are effaced by time, and the imagery is mouldered away.”—*John Locke*.

THE PENALTY OF PROFLIGACY.

“How like a younger, or a prodigal,
The scarfed bark puts from her native bay,
Hugg’d and embraced by the strumpet-wind;
How like the prodigal doth she return,
With over-weather’d sides and ragged sails—
Lean, rent, and beggar’d by the strumpet-wind.”—*Shakespeare*.

CHILDHOOD AND GOD.—“The smallest children are nearest to God, as the smallest planets are nearest the sun.”—*Jean Paul Richter*.

ATHEISM AND LITERATURE.—“Atheism, into whatsoever literary field it intrudes, brings with it the narrow, shallow, and degrading. No theme can reach its highest, or attain its apotheosis, till it reaches the feet of God. We laugh, therefore, at the idea that our Atheists can sneer religion from her throne. They may as easily sneer away the dews, the mountains, or the dawn.”—*J. V. Macbeth*.

ATHEISM AND ELOQUENCE.—“There is no being eloquent for Atheism. In that exhausted receiver the mind cannot use its wings.”—*Archd. Hare*.

“To use force before people are fairly taught the truth, is to knock a nail into a board without wimbling a hole in it, which then either not enters, or turns crooked, or splits the wood it pierceth.”—*Thomas Fuller*.

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Reviews.

PAULINE CHARITY DISCOURSES. By Rev. JOSEPH CROSS, D.D., LL.D
London : Higham, 27, Farringdon Street.

The grandest of all Psalms ever sung or composed is Paul's Psalm of love. It transcends, not only the highest sentiments of our Platos and Senecas, but all our Hebrew Psalmists. It is here developed with great freshness and force in twenty discourses. Our readers may form a tolerably correct conception of the spirit and style of this book by the concluding paragraph,—“What is the sum of the matter? Among the fairest and noblest human qualities there is nothing comparable to Christian charity. Charity is the queen of the graces, the empress of the virtues, the brightest gem on the brow of Emmanuel's bride. The reign of charity was the bloom of the unblighted Eden; the loss of charity was the forfeiture of primæval blessedness; and the recovery of charity will be Paradise regained. We want good health and long life, and large success, and public esteem, and posthumous fame, and the graces of learning, and the treasures of science, and the adornments of genius, with prosperous government, liberal education, purity in politics, wise statesmanship in Congress, ardent patriotism among the people, and churches richly endowed with the manifold gifts of God; but the grand desideratum—the one thing needful, the basis of all well-being, our greatest wealth on earth, and our richest endowment in heaven—is what we have endeavoured in these serial discourses clearly to explain and effectually to enforce for your Christian edification. O, God, the Giver of all good things! grant us the grace of Thy holy Spirit, and enable us all, as disciples of Thy dear Son, faithfully to follow after charity!—

‘Still looking to that goal sublime
Whose light remote, but sure, we see,
Pilgrims of love whose way is time,
Whose home is in eternity.’—*Moore.*

MODERN THEORIES IN PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION. By JOHN TULLOCH, D.D., LL.D. London : Blackwood and Sons.

“These Essays,” says the Author, “have a common object, and I have thought them, therefore, worthy of being published together. The same principles, more or less, reappear in them all, and these principles seem to

me of great importance. The question with which they deal in diverse application, is the great question of contemporary thought, in comparison with which all other questions are of little moment. Is there a spiritual world? Is there a metaphysical as well as a physical basis of life? Is reason, or soul, in other words, an entity, and not a mere manifestation of nervous force—a life behind all other life, and not merely the highest and most complex phase of natural life. All the naturalistic systems of thought so prevalent at the present time, assume a negative answer to these questions. They speak of mind, or spirit, or consciousness—they cannot help doing so, but they mean by such language merely a phenomenon—a phase of natural being—never a Spiritual entity or reality, distinct by itself, and essentially belonging to another and a higher state of being. Metaphysic is flouted as mere verbalism. Religion is discarded along with metaphysic, or at best, religion in the old sense.” The contents of this book are:—“August Comte and Positivism (the author of *Thorndale* and *Modern Scepticism*); Modern Scientific Materialism; Pessimism; Morality without Metaphysic; Religion without Metaphysic; Natural Religion—God; Professor Ferrier and the Higher Philosophy; Back to Kant, or Immanuel Kant and the Kantian Revival.” The subjects discussed comprise the most profound in philosophy, science, and religion. The author is one of the very few men of the age possessing the qualifications, both natural and acquired, for doing anything like justice to the Scientists and theories here discussed. Our readers who aspire to be abreast of the age by making themselves acquainted with the mental character and speculative enquiries of the great leaders of the world of thought, will, of course, procure and peruse this work of remarkable merit.

THE LEGENDS AND THEORIES OF THE BUDDHISTS COMPARED WITH HISTORY AND SCIENCE. By R. SPENCE HARDY, M.R.A.S. London: Frederic Norgate, Covent Garden.

The system attributed to Johama Buddha is one of the oldest beliefs in the world. It demands, therefore, a place among the records of religious opinions if for its antiquity alone. But it has other claims upon our attention. There is in it the germ of many of the speculations that are the most prominent in the shifting philosophies of the present day; and it is now professed at the lowest computation by three hundred millions of the human race. The information presented in this work has a further importance as the Dhamma is comparatively unknown in England. Of

this we have evidence in the singular fact that the name of Johama Buddha is not found in any work in our language that is exclusively biographical, although no uninspired man has exercised a greater influence upon the social and religious interests of the world. The object of this very interesting and instructive book is to expose some of the most notable defects and errors of Buddhism, the prevailing religion in Thibet, Nepal, Siam, Burmah, Japan, South Ceylon, and China. Our readers will find much in this volume that will expand their conceptions of religion, widen their realm of thought, and intensify their desire to get at the truth for themselves and diffuse it in the world.

JOHN WYCLIFFE. A QUINCENTENARY TRIBUTE. By JACKSON WRAY.
London: James Nisbet, Berners Street.

JOHN WICKLIFF. By REV. W. ATKINSON. London: T. Woolmer, Castle Street, City Road.

Here are two little volumes, by different authors, upon one life, and that life an ornament not merely to our own country but to the world. With the life of Wycliffe most students of Ecclesiastical history are familiar. As contact with such a life is quickening and elevating, the oftener the contact is felt the better. It would be invidious to draw any comparison between these two works on the same subjects. Both have particular merits.

THE CHRIST OF HISTORY. By ROBERT YOUNG, LL.D. London: Fisher Unwin, Paternoster Square.

This is the seventh edition of a work which we studied with the most intense interest when it was published several years ago. Although since then many Lives of Christ have appeared, and some ten times the size of this, they have not superseded the necessity, or by their merits dimmed the merits of this work. The author was not only an intimate friend, but an intellectual admirer and a loyal disciple of the late Caleb Morris, one of the greatest preachers that have appeared in London during the last half century. This book, though vigorously logical, is wondrously lucid and condensed, pulsating throughout with emotions of the most elevated and elevating kinds.



The
Leading Homily.

THE GOOD SUPERSEDED BY THE BETTER.

“BEHOLD THE ARK OF THE COVENANT OF THE LORD OF ALL THE EARTH PASSETH OVER BEFORE YOU INTO JORDAN.”—*Joshua* iii. 2.

HITHERTO the Israelites had been led on their way by the pillar of cloud. But now that was to be seen no more. With the death of Moses, apparently, it had disappeared. Then were the people from this time to be without any guide? Moses was gone, and the cloudy pillar was gone, and it was a strange land into which they were to enter. They had not passed that way heretofore. Were they to be left to their own wisdom and devices as they went forward to meet new dangers and new difficulties? Some of them may have had their fears, but such was not to be their fate. God fulfils Himself in many ways, and makes use of various methods and instruments in His dealings with men; but He Himself remains, and He never forsakes those who put their trust in Him, or fails them when they need His help. When Moses falls, Joshua is ready to take his place; and Joshua is even better fitted than Moses for the work which has now to be done. For the people need rather a soldier and a man of action now that the time is come to take possession of the new country, than a legislator, or a prophet.

And, again, though the pillar of cloud has vanished, another sign is given to them to indicate the way that they should go. "It came to pass," you read in the second verse of this chapter, "after three days that the officers went through the host, and they commanded the people, saying, When ye see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it." And you see that they are told, in the next verse, that they are not to go too near to it, not to crowd around it, but to keep at a distance of about 2000 cubits—half a mile or more—"that ye may know the way by which ye must go; for ye have not passed this way heretofore." So the ark is to take the place of the pillar of cloud.

It is better that there should come sometimes these changes of form—changes in the method of the Divine communication with men, or their communication with Him, though we are apt to quarrel with them, and to be greatly afraid when they seem to be impending. For our disposition is so strong to regard the means as the end, and to exalt the human or the material at the expense of the spiritual, of which it is the symbol, that we need, in order to be kept from idolatry, to have these visible things, these material props, taken from us, so that we may be led to trust more fully in the unseen, and to lean only on the eternal arm of God. It is hard to part with that with which we have long been familiar, and upon which we have been accustomed to depend—the particular ritual or form of worship—the house of prayer which has become a kind of embodiment of tender religious sentiments—the formulas by which the truth of God, which cannot be compressed in its fulness into any formulas, has always been presented to our minds,—or, it may be, the human preacher and guide whom we have been content and glad to follow. It is often a very painful trial to part with that which has been to us in our religious life what Moses was, or what the cloudy pillar was, to the children of Israel. But if such a trial should befall us, let us not be too greatly discouraged. It may be expedient for us that these things should be taken away, as it was expedient for the disciples that He should leave them who

had been their chief stay and comfort, and the symbol of all that was most holy and most wise, though they could not imagine at the time how it was possible that they should gain by His departure. God may be preparing to give us some better thing—something at least that will be better for us—better adapted to our spiritual condition and needs, in place of that which He is taking away. Or, He may be meaning to develope in us the spirit of dependence on Himself, which will make us less dependent on any earthly help, and will, therefore, make us more strong and free. Anything is a gain which serves this end, which leads us to lean more closely on the invisible arm, and press nearer to the heart of our Father in Heaven.

In the case of the Israelites it was a higher symbol that was now to take the place of the pillar. The pillar had answered its purpose. It had served to show the people the way they should go, and to remind them of the Divine guardianship; but in itself it had no special suggestiveness. But with the ark it was otherwise. It had a sacredness in public esteem, inasmuch as it contained the tables of the testimony. It was the repository of the law. The word of the Lord was enshrined in it. And it was not of the Divine law only that it spoke. It spoke of mercy also, of clemency, of God's forgiveness; for the lid of it was the mercy-seat. So that while it was a symbol of law, it was a symbol also of hope and of peace to those who might be mourning their inadequate fulfilment of the law. It was, then, an object to be regarded with reverence, and was in danger, indeed, of being regarded, as afterwards it was in fact, with superstitious reverence.

Now, then, the ark is to be followed. Let us try to realise the scene. It is one of great dramatic interest, as well as of moral significance. The people have been wandering long in the deserts. Now the time of their wandering is over. Their new home lies before them. They have heard much of its glories; now they are about to enter into the possession of it. But between them and their inheritance there rolls the Jordan, at this time, in the spring, swollen with the rains of winter and the melted snow from Lebanon, so that its channel is full to the brim and over-

flowing. Here is an obstacle that has to be met and overcome before the promised land is entered. How shall they cross the wide and turbulent stream? God will help them in their difficulty, as He has helped them before.

"Sanctify yourselves," says Joshua, "for to-morrow the Lord will do wonders among you."

"*Sanctify yourselves.*" There was a preparation appropriate and necessary on their part in view of the great event of the morrow,—a day which was to be memorable in their history, not only as the day when they crossed over into the land which they were to inherit, but as a day when Jehovah had interposed for their help. And let me say here that there is no important step in our lives, nor critical period, which we may not wisely anticipate with such preparation of the heart. If you are entering on any new stage in the journey of life, if some great difficulty is at hand, some unusual danger, some special form of temptation, so that you will need all the strength, all the wisdom, all the patience, all the grace which may be at your disposal, then sanctify yourself. In former ages when a man was about to consecrate himself to the service of the distressed, and to a life of stainless honour and purity as a Christian knight, he was required, having first confessed, to spend the midnight hours alone in church, that he might be prepared by that solemn vigil for the work and the strife which lay before him. And there are times when we should surely be the stronger and the more resolute, and should save ourselves, it might be, from many a lamentable fall, if, without conforming to the letter of that ancient custom, we acted in the spirit of it. "Watch and pray," said our Lord to His disciples, when the great crisis was at hand. "Watch and pray." Watching and praying are never out of season; but there are times (and we generally know when they come) when it is, in a very special sense, necessary that we should examine our position, that we should see wherein we are weak and in danger of falling, that we should take heed and confess our sin, and seek the Divine pardon and the Divine help; that we should sanctify ourselves that so we may not fail, as so many have failed who have gone into the battle without any such preparation.

So the children of Israel prepared for the events of the coming day; and now, when the day is come and the hour, the priests are bidden to take the ark and bear it down to the brink of the river. *The ark is to go first.* "Behold," says Joshua to the people, "the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth passeth over before you into Jordan." And the priests are obedient. They draw near to the river, with the host of Israel following them at a distance, so that all can see what will take place. Nearer and nearer they come to the rushing stream, and still there is no pause. It is a fine thing to see men advancing steadily and quietly, in the exercise of simple faith in God, to meet insuperable obstacles. You may smile at them, but you cannot help admiring them. You may call them fanatics, but you cannot consent to call them fools. And how often the sequel shows that they are not fools. How often it has happened that insuperable obstacles have been proved to be no serious obstacles at all; and impossibilities, so called, have become accomplished facts, as the results of the obstinate endeavours of those who have thought less of what was feasible or expedient than of what seemed to them to be their imperative duty in the sight of God. It happened so in this striking story of the passage of the Jordan. The priests march on, but no prospect of a safe passage appears. They come to the very brink of the stream, and still it rushes by, defying them, as the waves defied the mandate of the Danish king. Their feet become actually wet as they step into the flood, and *then* the way is made plain before them in a moment. *Not till then.* God's help comes when it is needed, not before. You want to have to-day what you will need to-morrow. You want to have difficulties removed now which will not become difficulties till some future time. We are so impatient and so anxious. But as our trust is in Christ, we should surely be able to come to a wiser mind. "Let the morrow," He says, "take thought for the things of itself." And those who have followed His counsel with an understanding heart have learned by experience what wise counsel it is. Go on bravely, and do the duty of the hour,—and when the emergency comes, if ever it does come, then will come also the means of escape. It is a great embarrassment which is

before you, and you think you will be overwhelmed; but by God's goodness it may be that you will scarcely do more than wet your feet. It was so with these priests. "It came to pass as they that bare the ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water, that the waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon an heap very far from the city Adam, that is beside Zaretan: and those that came down toward the sea of the plain, even the salt sea, failed, and were cut off." So a passage was made, and the priests carried the ark down into the midst of Jordan, and there remained till all the host of Israel had passed over.

But now, in our day, the ark has gone the way of the cloudy pillar. It too has disappeared. Are we then forsaken? Have we nothing to guide us in the strange and perilous way we have to go? It is only the voice of unbelief that can answer "No." God speaks to us, not as He spoke to our fathers, or to His people in ancient days, but not less truly than He spoke to them, and by a mightier though a gentler voice, and by a symbol infinitely more rich in meaning. To us in these later days He has spoken by His Son. And what is the Son? He is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person. It is He who is our Guide to lead us forward in the untrodden ways. Surely the pillar and the ark, yes, and the priest also, and all the forms and ritual of the old covenant, might well vanish away, if in their place the Christ, the Son of the living God, is to come. The ark was sacred to the people because it contained the tables of the testimony, and because it was the symbol of the forgiving mercy of God. But what is Christ? In Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. He carried with Him the holy and perfect law; and not as the ark contained the law that was given by Moses; but because He embodied it, because He fulfilled it in His own person and life. He is the Word that is made manifest. In Him, and not by rules and ordinances merely, but by all that He says, by all that He is, God's mind and heart reveal themselves to the world. He is the image of the Invisible God—a nobler symbol surely than any ever known to the old

dispensation—a symbol, indeed, that was more than a symbol—a symbol that not only suggested but actually revealed. And not only a higher and fuller revelation of the Divine *law*, but a surer symbol and evidence of the Divine *mercy* also. “Thou shalt put the mercy-seat above upon the ark,” had been the direction given to Moses; “and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee: and there I will meet with thee, and will commune with thee.” It was a great and precious promise. But if that which was done away was glorious, how much more does that which remains exceed in glory? For in Christ the Father draws near not to those alone who belong to a special order, and at appointed times, but at all times and to all men, and comes near to them that He may forgive them, that He may sanctify them, that He may reconcile them to Himself, that He may enrich them beyond measure with the benediction of His heavenly grace. A better Guide this is than any that had appeared before; and one whom we can love as a brother, one whom we can trust as a friend—no inanimate symbol that moves on in silence before us, and that we may not approach, that we dare not touch, but a man like ourselves, with warm human sympathies, touched with a feeling of our infirmities, knowing us, if we are willing to follow Him and to be His sheep, by name, and caring for us when we are tempted, and restoring us when we stumble and fall. To Him we are to look, and after Him we are to go, if we would travel in the ways of wisdom and peace, and attain to everlasting life.

And notice this—that, like the ark which was a type of Himself, He passes over before us into Jordan, that we who follow Him may pass through it in safety. Into Jordan—for between us, too, and the land of our hope and our desire, there rolls a deep and, as it seems to our fears at times perhaps, an impassable stream. Men of all times have had their hopes of a better world, into which they might enter at last. And we have had our hopes. Those especially who have had weariness and disappointments to bear, like the Israelites in their wanderings in the desert, have clung to the thought of a region of peace and joy which may be their

inheritance when the strife is over. But who has not had thoughts of such a future? of such a destiny? of such a home? We have much here that is sweet—many of us—much from which it would cost us not a little to part. But we have not all that we need; and in how many ways are we thwarted! Why the very fruition of our desire serves only to make it the more keen! Surely there are better things in store—a clearer vision, a larger life, a more perfect holiness. But between that bright world which our imagination paints and us there lies the dark and deep river. Not the stream of death merely. It is not death that threatens to hinder the fulfilment of our hopes. The sting of death is sin. It is sin that has made the stream so alarming. We have done wrong. And how can we meet with God, and how can we enter into that holy presence? How should we not be overwhelmed and lost in the passage that we must take when we depart out of this world? Well—let us look at this picture. Here is the ark of the Lord, in the centre of Jordan; and while it rests there, the people by hundreds and thousands are able to pass over to the other shore in safety. Does not that remind us of another scene? “They took Jesus,” you read in one of the Gospel accounts, “and led Him away. And He, bearing His cross, went forth unto a place called the place of a skull; and they crucified Him, and two other with Him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.” *“In the midst”*—the centre of all that terrible scene. What a scene it is! Death is there; and death the most shameful and agonising. And sin is there—sin the most aggravated and the most awful. Death had never worn so hateful an aspect as when it laid its finger upon Him, the Lord of life. Sin had never been so exceeding sinful and utterly shameful, as when it crucified and slew the Holy One of God. But Christ has passed over before us into this deep gulf of iniquity and horror. “He bore our sins in His own body on the tree.” “He tasted death for every man.” But, thanks be to God, the deep waters did not overwhelm Him. He entered into the midst of them, and they rolled back and acknowledged Him their Master. It was impossible for death to hold Him. He met it, and triumphed openly over it. And there He stands in the

centre of that Jordan that we dread, that we, trusting in Him and sharing in His victory and His joy and His eternal life, may pass over in safety and peace. "He leads us through no darker room than He went through before." Better than that! He waits for us Himself in that darkest room, as we think, which will also be the last, that He may make it light for us by the comfort of His presence. You remember it is said that poor *Christian* was greatly troubled and cast down as he passed through the river, and could not be comforted because of the sins he had committed in his pilgrimage, and before he had begun to be a pilgrim: but at length *Hopeful* said to him, "Be of good cheer! Jesus Christ maketh thee whole." And with that *Christian* broke out in a loud voice, "*I see Him!*" and He tells me, 'When thou passest through the waters I am with thee, and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee.' There will be times of darkness, no doubt, and of anxiety and trouble; and Christ's servant may not be always able to see His face. But there He is, nevertheless, in death as in life, abiding with those who humbly seek to do His will. Let it be ours to abide with Him in life, and then in the hour of extremity we may be sure that He is at hand; and resting in His love we shall depart in peace to the land of everlasting light.

BRISTOL.

H. ARNOLD THOMAS, M.A.

CHRIST WITHIN.—"I believe that Jesus Christ is in every man, and that it is His suffering voice which speaks in the conscience of every man. I believe that He is thus suffering for every man, the just for the unjust, that He may bring us back to God. I believe thus that the recorded history of our Lord in the Gospels is the outward and objective manifestation of a great subjective truth, which is going on, and which will go on until every soul of man is brought back to God. And I am sure that the sorrow which holy love feels for sin is the true essential and divine medicine for sin. I believe that the knowledge of the distinction between right and wrong is a most precious gift; and yet I believe that it cannot alone accomplish the task of turning man's heart from self to God. We need to know that the voice which in conscience speaks to us of right and wrong, is the voice of a love which suffers when we do wrong, and must continue to suffer till we return from self to God."—
T. ERSKINE.

Germs of Thought.

The Disciples' Question and Christ's Answer.

"HIS DISCIPLES ASKED HIM, SAYING, MASTER, WHO DID SIN, THIS MAN, OR HIS PARENTS, THAT HE WAS BORN BLIND? JESUS ANSWERED, NEITHER HATH THIS MAN SINNED, NOR HIS PARENTS: BUT THAT THE WORKS OF GOD SHOULD BE MADE MANIFEST IN HIM."—*John ix. 2, 3.*

THIS narrative is, perhaps, the most dramatic in the pages of the New Testament. At the same time it is one of the most simple and natural. A poor man, blind from his birth, sits, probably, somewhere near the temple, begging of the passers by. Something in his demeanour arrests the attention of Christ. Probably he has asked an alms, as his wont was. Jesus stops, and instead of giving him the expected coin begins a merciful work of healing. The man evidently was well known. And the different modes in which the people deal with the fact of the healing are portrayed with a truthfulness and fidelity to nature that are convincing proofs of its genuineness. The wonder and questioning of the neighbours, the reluctance of the Pharisees to acknowledge the miracle, their malicious endeavour to discredit Jesus because he had healed the man on the sabbath day, their persistent attempts to silence testimony, the timidity and cowardice of the man's parents, the simple but courageous loyalty of the man himself, are all told with graphic naturalness, with life-like touches that make the scenes live before us.

Nor less true to nature is the question of the disciples by which the narrative is introduced. When they beheld this man they immediately assumed that sin was at the root of his suffering. Either himself or his parents had been guilty of some grievous wrong which God had severely punished. His blindness

was the penalty of some forgotten deed of evil. So they questioned, "Master, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

Now this question was based on assumptions in which there was some truth and much error. And our object now will be to separate between the false and true in the ideas that possessed the disciples.

I.—Look first at THE TRUTH THAT UNDERLAY THIS QUESTION OF THE DISCIPLES. When they asked, "Who did sin, this man, or his parents," they assumed, and rightly,—

1. *That sin deserves punishment.* All sin is the transgression of God's law. God's law is ever wise and good and loving. Therefore all sin is the violation of what is just and wise and good. And because it is so it merits chastisement. The mistake of men is that they think of the law of God as being an arbitrary restriction of our liberty. They conceive of God as narrowing human action by rules which have no ground save in the caprice of His will. Now that is a grievous mistake. What God forbids He forbids for our welfare. And what He commands He commands for our own blessing. When He utters His "Thou shalt, thou shalt not," He is but revealing the laws that gird our life, on which our well-being depends. When He declares, "Thou shalt not bow down thyself to any graven image" or creature likeness, that is no mere jealous guarding of His own exclusive right to be worshipped. It is the promulgation of a law, disobedience to which involves the transgressor in degradation and debasement. For the worshipper surely becomes like his god. And to worship any being lower than the highest is to wrong and injure your own soul. So when He declares, "Thou shalt not steal, or kill, or covet," these are not arbitrary restrictions of our freedom, but essential conditions of our welfare. Nothing that God has disallowed can be safely indulged in. Nothing that He has enjoined can be safely neglected. And this not merely because He has threatened to punish or promised to reward, but because it is in the nature of certain actions to injure us, and of others to bring blessing. God's law is but the expression of

perfect love and unbounded wisdom. It is based on eternal realities, and not on the mere chance caprice of the moment or the age. It is rooted in the nature of things. Deeper than that we cannot go. And, we say, whatever contravenes this law, is a violation of eternal right and of Divine love. Sin, therefore, deserves to be punished. So much of truth there was in the minds of the disciples when they asked the question, "Did this man sin, or his parents, that he was born blind?"

2. *That sin is followed by punishment.* It would be ignoring a vast accumulation of human experience to deny this. Sin brings a certain amount of necessary injury along with it. In some measure and degree it is always punished, not, indeed, always immediately, nor always in exact proportion to the offence. But just as you cannot grasp fire without being burned, neither can you sin without suffering. The transgressor may, indeed, prosper in worldly matters. Success may attend him in business, a place of honour may be assigned him in society, wealth may accumulate in his hands, friends may gather round him who are ignorant of his evil or who wink at it. But for all that, his evil deeds are treasuring up wrath for him against the day of wrath. His character is becoming degenerate and debased. All perverse transgression of right corrupts and degrades him who practises it. His sweetest affections are deflowered, his holiest instincts become perverted, his moral faculties are thrown into confusion and chaos. You cannot trace the operation, it is going on in secrecy within his heart. But as the worm eats into the timbers of the vessel till they are honey-combed through and through, so that the first great strain of wind or tide will shatter her to pieces, even so the man who lives in sin is becoming secretly and unaided a moral and spiritual wreck. The ancients had a saying that the gods have feet of wool, meaning that penalty often follows the sinner noiselessly and unobserved, that it comes on him unawares. But come it will.

3. *That the consequences of sin are often hereditary.* The man might be suffering for evils of which himself was innocent but which his parents or ancestors had committed. Why this should be so is a difficult question, but that it is so admits of no doubt.

Enfeebled constitutions and morbid tendencies to disease and depraved moral biases are transmitted oftentimes from one generation to another. Even to the third and fourth generation does this malignant legacy descend. Is this fearful fact a testimony against sin written in the groans and anguish and misery of the innocent? Is sin so evil that its results thus reach the unborn? O what a blackness and awfulness gather round the nature of sin where we thus trace its effects! Only one thought can lighten in some measure this terrible fact. If the innocent suffer for the deeds of others, they are not chargeable with their guilt. And if we inherit biases or tendencies to evil, God will take these into account in dealing with us and judging us. If men have had to wrestle with transmitted infirmities and proclivities to wrong, they will be judged very differently from those who have escaped these taints of blood. When God scans the life of yonder poor city Arab, who was born in sin and cradled in vice and trained to crime, He will deal gently with him. He will take into account those defects which he received without guilt of his own.

So much of truth there was in the ideas of the disciples which prompted the question, "Who did sin, this man, or his parents?"

II.—WE PASS ON TO CONSIDER WHAT WAS FALSE AND UNTRUE IN THEIR IDEA.

1. *First of all they erred in applying right principles in a wrong manner.* They were right in holding that sin deserves punishment, that it *is* punished, and that its taint is often hereditary. But they were wrong in applying these true ideas to the case of this poor sufferer. Because this man was blind they rashly concluded that either himself or his parents had deeply sinned. It was precisely the same harsh and uncharitable error into which the friends of Job fell. It is precisely the error of many to-day who interpret rashly God's providences to the disadvantage of their neighbours. Especially are men prone to see in the disasters of their opponents the tokens of God's anger. If those from whom we differ in religious opinion, or other matters, suffer some calamity, "Ah," says the human heart, "there,

I knew it, I knew they were wrong and would be punished." Let us guard against rash, uncharitable judgments. Think you that those eighteen on whom the tower of Siloam fell were sinners above all that dwelt in Jerusalem. "I tell you, Nay: but except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish."

2. *They looked upon all affliction as punishment—as being the penalty for some wrong.* They thought all suffering by men was an expression of God's anger. Disease, calamity, loss of goods, bereavement and every kind of sorrow were to be traced back to the Divine vengeance against some violation of His law. No doubt these disciples had been educated in this belief. It was a cherished doctrine among the old Hebrews. They had been taught to believe that obedience to God would be rewarded, and disobedience punished by temporal blessing or cursing. And the whole economy of Moses was arranged to secure this end. Temporal penalties were inflicted for spiritual offences. He that blasphemed the name of the Lord was stoned to death; so was the sabbath-breaker equally with the man-slayer. It is easy to understand how this social arrangement should give rise to the idea that all suffering was a punishment for sin. But Christ taught the world a new and higher conception of the meaning of suffering. He forbade the uncharitable inference that affliction was necessarily the result of sin. He showed that the sufferings of this present life have a wise and gracious purpose to fulfil—a purpose often far off, unseen. In other words, suffering is often purely disciplinary. It is sent to prune, as the gardener's knife does; to purge, as the fire purges the gold from the dross. It is sent in love to make the weak strong and the good better. It is a necessary part in man's education, without which the full meaning of manhood would never be revealed. Suffering brings out some of the finest features of human character. It develops that long enduring patience by virtue of which men press on through defeat and disappointment to ultimate success. It calls into play the tender sympathy and devoted love and heavenly compassion which are among the chief adornments of our nature. How but for human suffering could such characters have been as Florence Nightingale, John Howard, and Mr. Müller, of Bristol.

Yes, our human life has been enriched in its experiences and glorified in its manifestations by the existence of suffering in the world. Affliction is often simply the discipline which the kind and loving Father in Heaven sees meet to send us for our good.

Here, then, the disciples were utterly wrong in thinking this man's suffering could have no other explanation but in his or his parents' sins. But another great error of the disciples was this—

3. *They conceived that Providence always metes out perfect and impartial awards in this life.* The good, they thought, were always and exactly rewarded. The evil were always punished in due proportion to their offence. So as this man was, as they thought, evidently being punished, he must be, or his parents must have been, great offenders. For the Divine awards are certain, exact, and unerring. And this is an idea which also largely prevails still. Now while we believe that sin always brings some punishment, we do not believe the punishment is always proportioned to the offence, nor does it fall immediately on the transgressor. And while we believe that there is a stream of tendency making for righteousness, and that, in the long run, sin meets with penalty and good with reward, still there is much more in human life than such facts as these. There are facts which are hard to reconcile with the righteous rule of an all-powerful Being. It is only in books that the villains of a story are all exposed and punished, and that all the heroes triumph over every difficulty and are crowned with prosperity. But you will find that books which are true to nature do not twist the facts of life to gratify sentimental readers. In the pages of Shakespeare many a gentle heart is crossed in love and broken by misfortune. Many a noble life is portrayed which begins with promise and ends with failure. And that is but a reflection of human experience, it is but a transcript of what is seen happening every year. For indeed our life is full of inequalities. Ofttimes the evil prosper and the good are overwhelmed with adversity. Men of great merit are outstripped by boisterous conceit. Arrogant pretension rides rough-shod over unpretending worth. Gentleness and modesty are trodden in the dust by loud-mouthed self-assertion. Virtue and honour cannot hold their

own against cunning and chicanery. Unscrupulous greed laughs amid her gathered treasures at the unprofitable integrity of conscientious men. No! the reward of virtue and religion are not seldom the contempt and persecution of the world. He who would be religious to advance his temporal interests is seriously mistaken. If our love to God has no deeper root than that, it will speedily be destroyed through disappointed expectations. The rewards of piety are peace, love, purity; but not outward gains and emoluments.

Here then was the great mistake of the disciples, in thinking that God's awards are always perfectly dispensed in this life, and that, therefore, this man or his parents must have been great sinners, since he was blind from his birth. Turn next to—

III.—THE ANSWER OF OUR LORD. “Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.”

Of course Christ did not mean that no sin had ever been committed by this man or his parents, but simply that his suffering was not the result or the punishment of their sins. Those sufferings had a different origin and cause,—that the works of God might be manifested in him.

By this reply then we are taught that God afflicts oftentimes for ends unseen and unrecognised, but all worthy and good.

1. *To show forth His glory.* You see how that glory was made manifest through the affliction of this poor sufferer. Christ found him in his helplessness and gave him sight. Now here was a revealing of God. But what was revealed—Divine power? No doubt. It was Divine power only that could have made those eyes, so long sightless, look upon the green earth and the bright sun. But it was not Divine power only or chiefly that was so revealed. It was the compassion, the tenderness, the sympathy dwelling in God's heart that were most of all manifested. And in the deed of Christ, in giving this man his sight, the works of God, the glory of God, the heart of God were revealed and made manifest. I have often thought that God's glory is revealed in many a poor afflicted sufferer to-day. Only lately I visited a

friend who was slowly dying of a very painful disease. For months she had endured uncomplainingly the most excruciating agony that can thrill the human frame. She wrote on a slate, for the disease had destroyed the power of speech, "Can you explain why God permits his children to suffer such pain." I said, what could I say?—"I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because Thou didst it." Then after a while I recalled these words of Jesus, "That the works of God should be made manifest." In the calm faith which sustained my friend in her patient, Christ-like submission, in her quiet waiting for death, and in her hope of immortality, was not God's glory seen?

2. But, again, looking at this subject more generally, *these afflictions, that visit good and bad alike, teach us that this life is not all our existence.* These inequalities that now prevail, this apparent confusion in which the good are often defeated and the wicked triumphant, are strong hints and suggestions that another scene will correct and perfect what is now so wrong. God has given us a strong instinctive feeling that goodness must some day be victorious, and that evil will be finally overcome. We believe that. It is a native instinct of the human heart. But in the present life these confusions exist. We see, indeed, a tendency in good even now to gain the victory, but that tendency is often thwarted and crossed. So we feel that a righteous and loving Lord will not finally leave matters in this condition. He will make gloriously manifest that He is against all sin and on the side of all good. He will show that the cause of right, of justice, and of truth is His own cause. But if He must do this, then there must be a hereafter for you, for me, for all of us. In that after life we shall behold the final and complete victory of good over evil. In that other world, the goal of all pure souls, "the crooked will be made straight, the rough places plain," and that which is wanting shall be numbered. All the inequalities of the present removed, all its evils redressed.

"Oh, yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill,
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt and taints of blood.

"That nothing walks with aimless feet,
That not one life shall be destroyed,
Or cast as rubbish in the void,
When God hath made the pile complete.

"Behold, we know not anything :
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last—far off—at last to all,
And every winter change to spring."

LEEDS.

JAMES LEGGE, M.A.



Gamaliel and his Advice; or the Policy of Caution and Neutrality.

"AND NOW I SAY UNTO YOU, REFRAIN FROM THESE MEN, AND LET THEM ALONE : FOR IF THIS COUNSEL OR THIS WORK BE OF MEN, IT WILL BE OVERTHROWN : BUT IF IT IS OF GOD, YE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO OVERTHROW THEM ; LEST HAPLY YE BE FOUND EVEN TO BE FIGHTING AGAINST GOD."—*Acts* v. 38, 39. (*R.V.*)

BROADLY speaking, men divide themselves into three classes in relation to Christianity.

First: There are the open enemies, who never miss an opportunity of offering unto it the most energetic and violent opposition.

Secondly: To this class belong the earnest advocates and the zealous propagators of Christianity.

Thirdly: But coming midway between these two classes there is another, which we might term the cautious, timid, and perhaps, temporising, neutral class. On this I wish to dwell.

Peter and his comrades stood before the Sanhedrim, charged with nothing worse than having taught and healed in the name of Christ. The feeling of the meeting seemed to run strongly

in favour of further imprisonment. Speech after speech was delivered in favour of physical violence. Possibly Paul was there, Saul then, and delivered a vigorous and fervent speech in favour of imprisonment, if not of death. At length Gamaliel arose; probably the grandson of Hillel, the great Rabbi, himself a Rabbi worthy of such an ancestor; the theological professor, at whose feet Saul had sat. He was deeply versed in the law, and regarded on every hand as a pious, learned, and able man. A man, too, of known moderation and tolerance, hence regarded by all parties as "*a safe man*." His speech was what we might term a moderate speech. It counselled caution, "refrain," "take heed." "Do not lay rash and violent hands on these men." "Do not endeavour to stamp out this new religion or irreligion by rash and violent methods. Wait a little; let time be the test. This movement is either human or Divine; if human, it will come to nought without your interference; if Divine, by interfering you only fight against God."

Now it may be worth our while for a few minutes to discuss this policy of Gamaliel's. "Wait; refrain from using violence, let time be the test of the character of the movement." It has its *favourable* aspect and so far is it to be commended; it has also its *unfavourable* aspect, and so far is it to be condemned.

I.—THE FAVOURABLE ASPECT OF THIS POLICY. Let us point out what there is that is commendable in this policy of awaiting the test of time.

(a) *Time certainly is a most searching and accurate test.* It is very difficult to judge a movement that is in its infancy. But let it develope, take shape, make for itself "a local habitation and a name," "then he who runneth may read"; "though fools they cannot err therein." By their fruits men are known. By their fruits movements too are known. But then you must allow time for the fruit to appear and to mature. Time is generally an unfailing test. Here is a movement,—it is difficult to detect its true character, whether it will grow like an upas tree, poisonous and destructive, or like a splendid oak, under the shadow of which nations yet unborn may find shelter and rest. Give it

time it will demonstrate its own character. This was the test which Gamaliel counselled the Sanhedrim to apply to Christianity, which was then in its infancy. Its Founder had only recently been crucified. True, a large accession had been made to the Christian faith in the day of Pentecost. But it was uncertain how the new converts would turn out, what influence their new faith would have on their life. It all needed testing, and time would test it. Give it time to develop its destructive features, that it may prove whether it is from God or from man, by its success or its failure.

(b) *Certainly this policy is opposed to that objectionable method of procedure which is characterised by "zeal without knowledge."* There are those whose zeal in itself is really commendable; but they rush on rashly, never taking time to consider the bearing of present action on future events; they will run and risk their life to rescue a child in danger, but, perhaps, they will knock down half-a-dozen children on their way and do them serious harm. They will spend their best energies to advance a principle which they hold dear, but, perhaps, they will trample on many other principles which are equally true and divine. "Zeal without knowledge." Their warm hearts are not under the direction of wise heads. Such men, while they may do much good, are liable to do more harm than good. They may build up, but they may pull down more than they build up. They may mean well, and we ought to give them credit for good intentions, but they do not take sufficient time for thought and prayer. Their action, while enthusiastic, is ill-directed.

Well, Gamaliel and his friends are not guilty of this fault. They are never led into anything rash. If they err, they err on the safe side. They do not do much *harm*, if they do *no good*. They will not hinder a good movement, though they may not help it. They will not further a bad cause, though they may do nothing to hinder it. Their policy is to refrain, to take heed, to take no action until time makes it quite clear whether the cause be human or Divine.

(c) *There is some amount of wise, cautious humility and devoutness also about this policy of Gamaliel and his friends*

They greatly fear lest they should be found fighting against God ; opposing His will and purpose. They knew that that would not only be *fruitless*, but *sinful* and *blasphemous*.

It is a sad thing to find even a portion of one's life *fruitless*. You have toiled hard for years to attain a certain object. At last you are on the point of attaining it. Exultingly you say, like Job of old, "I shall now die in my nest—the nest which I have taken years to make secure and warm." But you have no sooner begun to enjoy its comfort, before the iron hand of some stern providence comes and shatters it, and scatters it to the winds, and in your old age you are flung out destitute into a cold world. That is very sad, and such cases as these occur. To see the fruit of the years perish before your eyes, that is a great calamity. But I will tell you what is a greater calamity : to find at the end of your life, when you are about entering on the great unknown, that you have lived to no good purpose, that you have not a shred of satisfaction to take hold of ; that you have lived and laboured for self ; that the structure of your character must come down about your head, and you saved, if at all, as by fire ; and that like Lot, leaving Sodom behind and all he possessed there, you must enter empty-handed into the unknown eternal world. Moral fruitlessness is a terrible calamity. To fight against God then is *fruitless*, for He must conquer in the end and our work come to nought. But it is also *sinful*, and even *blasphemous*. Blasphemy, properly so-called, is speaking against God, but there is also a blasphemy which consists in acting against Him, in using those faculties with which He Himself has endowed us, to frustrate His will and purpose, and to further the ends and intents of the devil.

Well, Gamaliel and his friends strove to steer clear of this evil. They are cautiously humble and devout. They would not for the world be found fighting against God. Hence their policy is to "take heed," to "refrain," to wait until time proves whether God be in the movement or not.

II.—THE UNFAVOURABLE ASPECTS OF THIS POLICY.

(a) *It makes this mistake, it regards the external results of a*

movement as the unfailing test of its character. Or to put it in this way: It says, "this movement succeeds—it is Divine; this movement fails—it is human." Success or failure is taken as the test. But is it a true test? I trow not. Some of the most *successful* movements have had the least of God in them, and some of the least successful have had the most of God in them. There are more Roman Catholics in the world than Protestants; are we, therefore, to conclude that Roman Catholicism has more of the Divine in it than Protestantism? There are more Mohammedans in the world than Protestant Christians. Is Mohammedanism more Divine than Protestant Christianity? Mohammedanism had its start several centuries after Christianity, but it grew for a time with far greater rapidity. Was it more Divine? The followers of Buddha are more numerous than all other religionists. Is Buddhism more Divine because of that? It is evident then that external success is not an absolute test of the spirituality and Divinity of a religion, or of the characters of a movement.

Where are the people? They are gone elsewhere. Is there more spirituality in the latter than in the former? More of God in the one than in the other?

Results! Results!! That is the great cry of the day. And it is almost thought that spiritual results can be got to order just like material results. It is as though you said to one man, "Go into my garden, till that soil, in so much time, and I will give thee thy wages"; and to another man, in the same spirit, "Go, and get so many converts in so much time, and I will give thee thy wages." The gardener returns at the end of that time and says, "I have fulfilled your commands"; and you say, "Well done; receive thy wages." The preacher, the evangelist (call him what you like) labours hard, and returns to you and says, "I have laboured hard, but know of no results." Then you call him slothful and unprofitable. But where is the difference? The difference is this, that one works on passive soil, and the other on souls that can defy all his efforts; and herein lies an infinite difference. Business men, who labour for results, and who get them, are dissatisfied with ministers if they do not always reap

their harvests. But our spheres are totally different. You send your boy to the tailor for a suit of clothes; he gets it; you are satisfied. Do you send him in the same spirit to the master of the Grammar School, saying, "I want a good education for my boy; so much time; so much money?" The master would reply, "Education is not to be had to order; there are other matters to be taken into consideration: has your son the ability, the application to learn? without that I can do nothing with him."

If it is so with intellectual results, how much more so with moral and spiritual results. We cannot get true conversions to order; we may get spurious ones. Nor is it possible to count true converts. Man can count *heads*; but it takes God Himself to count *hearts*. Therefore the test of external results is not an absolutely safe test. Your movement may be Divine and yet it may scarcely make any headway, and the more so the Diviner it is.

Are we, therefore, not to aim for success? By all means. All the success that we can get; as many hearers, as many converts, as many Christian workers as possible. Only do not rely on external results as furnishing an unfailing test of the character of any work. This the policy of Gamaliel is guilty of.

(b) Moreover this policy is productive of *culpable inactivity and moral cowardice*. Here was a movement in its infant years. If any movement ever was Divine, this was. It bore the indubitable stamp of Divinity on its forehead, and anyone who looked into it with prayer and without prejudice would recognise this. But Gamaliel and his friends looking at it with doubtful, cautious eyes, take heed, refrain, follow the policy of neutrality. They neither bless it nor curse it. Now the most critical period of any movement, or of any new religion, is its infancy. Then does it bear the severest brunt of prejudice and hostility. The severest period in the history of Christianity was the apostolic age and the ages immediately following. We ought to thank God that there were men brave enough and strong enough to overcome the first opposition. After a while it makes itself felt in the world; it proves itself to be a power for good. Now Gamaliel and his friends will join it. "We are glad to see you even now, you Gamalielites; but you did not lend us a helping

hand when the waves of opposition nearly swamped our ship; we and our cause would have perished for you; you looked out on us with timid, cautious, neutral eyes. But now that we have got to shore, and established our character and power, you seek to join our ranks. Come in; even at this hour we are glad to see you; only we must tell you that you have been guilty of culpable inactivity and of moral cowardice." Thus many a good cause has flagged and failed, and the millenium has been postponed for centuries for the want of earnest advocates. Gamaliel and his friends will only join a successful cause; but a flagging interest they will refrain from touching.

On the other hand, take a movement directly the reverse of that to which we have alluded, not only not Divine, but sinful and calculated to do a terrible amount of mischief. In its earlier years its destructive features are not written in large letters, still they are written in such letters as the keen observer can read. What do Gamaliel and his friends do? They refrain from taking any action. They neither bless nor curse. They allow the evil, the mischievous movement to grow, to establish itself. They might nip it in the bud, were they to take prompt, decisive action. But they allow it to stretch its roots into the soil, to spread its branches in the air, until it becomes a great upas tree, charged with poisonous influences, firmly fixed in the world's soil. "You cautiously timid, inactive Gamalielites, you are anxious not to be found fighting against God; wherefore are ye not equally desirous to fight for Him? He requires you not only not to oppose His will, but also to further His will. You do not further His will when you allow evil to grow unchallenged and unopposed." There are many of whom it may be said, "They have *done* no evil." But what evil have they *opposed*; what good have they done? Nothing! Then is their poor, harmless inactivity culpable in the sight of God. "Thou wicked and slothful servant," said the Master to the man in the parable who had done no harm, but who had done no good.

(c) Then there is that further error in this policy of neutrality and delay, viz.—that it *presumes too much on Divine power and relies too little on human instrumentality*. It says, "If that

work or counsel be of God, *He* will make it successful; if it be sinful, then *He* will bring it to nought." Now, how does God promote His purposes? Through good men. How does He baffle and bring to nought evil doings? Through good men. He works on men through men. They are His instruments, and if they are not forthcoming then will His work be undone. The old excuse for inactivity is, "God will see to it." No! He will not, unless you place yourself humbly in His hand and say, "Send me, send me!" What was the excuse of our ancestors, who were opposed to modern missions: "If God means to convert the world, He will see to that." But He would never convert the world unless the men came forward and severally said, "Send me, send me!" We can never rely too much on Divine power; we can never rely too much on human co-operation. God is achieving the redemption of man through man. Are we allowing Him to use us for that grand purpose? Or are we endeavouring to cover our culpable inactivity by the old excuse: "The work is His, and He will see to it."

Two men rise now before me, both able and gifted, both capable of doing great things; the one the master, the other the pupil. I mean Gamaliel and Paul. Gamaliel was a cautiously timid, neutral man. He adopted the policy of delay. Paul was an earnestly active man. He could not wait; he was bound to be doing. As the opponent of Christianity he was sincere and earnest. He hunted and persecuted the Christians with all his heart and soul and strength. He was sincere in what he did. But new light shone upon him, as it always does on the sincere and earnest. He exclaimed, "What wilt thou have me to do?" As he had *opposed* Christianity so did he now *promote* it, with all his heart, soul, and might, as if the very salvation of the world depended upon himself alone. Well, what is the result? This: that I know of nothing for which I, or the world, is particularly indebted for to Gamaliel. He was a gifted man, respected in his day, and that is all we can say about him. But the Christian world can never be too thankful to God for His servant Paul, who devoted all his faculties to the furtherance of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

What is the conclusion of the whole matter? Every movement, social, political, religious, let us try to understand. Let us bring to bear upon it the faculties which God has given us, without prejudice and with prayer.

Should it remain a mystery, let us wait, not listlessly, but with faces wistfully upturned towards Heaven, solicitous to know the will of God.

When light is given from Heaven, let us act accordingly, whether in favour or in opposition, act sincerely, with heart and soul. By doing the will of God, as far as it is revealed, we shall know more of the doctrine. Obedience to the convictions we have will lead to larger knowledge, and larger knowledge to fuller obedience.

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HENRY HARRIES, M.A.



ATHEISM NOT MET BY LOGIC.—Logic never will decide the matter. He who traces nothing of God in his own soul will never find God in the world of matter—mere circlings of force there, of iron regulation, of universal death and merciless indifferency. Nothing but a dead steam engine there. It is in the soul of man, when reverence, love, intelligence, magnanimity has been developed there, that the Highest can disclose itself face to face in sun splendour, independent of all cavils and jargonings. There of a surety, and nowhere else. And is not that the real court for such a cause? Matter itself—the outer world of matter—is either nothing, or else a product due to man's mind. To mind, all questions, especially this question, come for ultimate decision, as in the universal highest and final Court of Appeal. I wish all this could be developed, universally set forth, and put on its true basis.—*Thomas Carlyle.*

Homiletical Commentary.

NOTES ON THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

“Evil-speaking, Law-judging.”

Chapter iv. 11, 12.—“SPEAK NOT EVIL ONE OF ANOTHER, BRETHREN. HE THAT SPEAKETH EVIL OF HIS BROTHER, AND JUDGETH HIS BROTHER, SPEAKETH EVIL OF THE LAW, AND JUDGETH THE LAW: BUT IF THOU JUDGE THE LAW, THOU ART NOT A DOER OF THE LAW, BUT A JUDGE. THERE IS ONE LAWGIVER, WHO IS ABLE TO SAVE AND TO DESTROY: WHO ART THOU THAT JUDGEST ANOTHER?”

IN the Revised Version the words, “Speak not evil one of another,” are rendered, “speak not one against another,” speaking evil of, and speaking against meaning very much the same thing. To speak *against* a man, except at the imperative call of duty, is to speak evil of him; to speak evil of him, even though the evil that is said about him be true, is to speak against him, except again, of course, where the interests of truth would suffer if the truth were not told about him. To speak evil of a man, and to speak against him are, then, two different phrases for very much the same thing; with this distinction, that “to speak against” is at once a wider and a narrower expression than to speak evil of. It is wider, for it embraces every kind of evil-speaking, even that kind which is not considered evil speaking because it is limited to truth speaking. Some people think they are not speaking evil of their brother so long as they strictly adhere to speaking the truth about him. To slander him, or to exaggerate even what is true about him, this would be evil-speaking; but to repeat, to

What is
speaking
against?

circulate the story exactly as it happened, without any embellishment, because it does not need any, this surely cannot be set down as evil-speaking. The apostle will not let such people escape from his searching words. Did they tell that true story against the man? Did they tell it to injure him? Then it was evil-speaking, though it did not diverge in the slightest from the truth. When James says, "Speak not one against another," he is thinking of the truth-speaking evil-speaking man, as well as the lie-speaking evil-speaking man. But again, "to speak against" is a narrower expression than "to speak evil of," and here as well it has the advantage. It is never right, in the strict sense of the words, to speak evil of a man; it is frequently right to speak against a man; to withstand him to the face because he is to be blamed; nay, for the sake of someone whose interests would suffer but for the exposure to expose the evil he has done, to condemn and to punish it. "To speak against" includes all that is right, it excludes all that is wrong, in speaking the evil that he may know of any one. To speak the truth against a man is oftentimes the very worst form of evil-speaking, it is oftentimes the most solemn obligation.

Enough about the words; what about the thing itself? In what connection does the apostle introduce it here, and having spoken at great length on the sins of the tongue already, why does he again dwell upon them now?

In the immediate context he has been speaking of the spirit of worldliness which had crept to such an alarming extent into the Churches of the twelve tribes scattered abroad, specially of that form of it which comes out in opposition to God, in setting itself against God, in not submitting to God. He had called on them to repent of such wickedness and rebellion against the Most High, to be afflicted and mourn and weep, to let their laughter be turned to mourning and their joy to heaviness, to humble themselves in the sight of the Lord. "Yes, but this is only meant for high-handed sinners, for those who are very far gone in wickedness; there are few who are so corrupted with worldliness as to need such rebukes and calls to repentance, surely such iniquity is very rare, very uncommon among Christian men."

Nay, replies the apostle to the implied palliation, not so rare, not so very uncommon even in the Church of Christ. Why, every time you speak evil of your brother, every time you tell a story against him to his hurt, whether it be true or no, you set yourself against God, you pick faults with His law, you usurp His throne and seat yourself there as judge. "*Whosoever speaketh against a brother, or judgeth a brother, speaketh against the law, and judgeth the law; but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.*" We think we are not worldly, not proudly rebellious against God, not needing the exhortation, "Submit yourselves to God." "Stop," says the apostle, "have you ever been guilty of evil-speaking, are you possibly guilty of it now? Then I mean you when I say 'Submit yourselves to God.' As you are now you are set against God, you are the rebellious, you are seating yourselves on God's throne and making yourselves what God alone can be, man's judge."

It is in this connection the subject of evil-speaking comes up again in the course of the apostle's exhortations, and coming up in this way it is evident why he could not dismiss it as something

**The Apostle
recurs to the
subject.**

he had already considered, how he felt himself constrained to dwell upon it till he had traced it to its real source and laid it open in its true nature, if by any means he might prevail to break off the habit which, while it might seem so trivial, was in its essence virulent rebellion against the Most High, contempt of His law, usurpation of His throne.

So much for the words themselves and for the connection in which they occur. What is the thing meant by them; what does the apostle mean; what do we mean by speaking against a brother,—the evil-speaking against which we are warned, and which is so worthy of all condemnation?

To begin with, the object against which evil-speaking is directed,—a person, a person in some way related to us, a brother, or a neighbour; a person more or less known to us who has in some way or other thwarted and crossed us; a person, therefore, against whom we cherish unkindly feelings, and whose downfall or discomfiture it would not grieve us to see. It is not mere abstractions, vague, general principles that we speak evil

of ; it is persons, flesh and blood, men and women with human feelings, and whose human feelings we can reach and touch and sting. Then, it is not strangers we speak against, persons we have only heard of remotely ; it is men and women we have met and known and been familiar with, whose secrets, perhaps, we have known, and who may have laid themselves open by some blunder or crime to our speaking evil against them. Then, they must have thwarted us, come across us in some way, taken some prize we had set our hearts upon, gained reputation or affections or position we had lost. To sum up, the object of evil-speaking is a person, well-known to us, who has thwarted us, against whom we have a grudge, which comes out in this way.

It will appear why the object against which evil-speaking is thus limited and defined. It is necessary to put aside, on the one hand, its essentially malignant forms, such as do not call for

**Necessary
limitations in
defining
evil-speaking**

Christian discussion, because not found among Christians, Satanic evil-speaking for example, for surely it is not to transgress against the charity of the Gospel, to say that he is of his father the devil who could wilfully, maliciously, circulate a falsehood regarding his fellow-man,—such a falsehood as the Pharisees were guilty of when they said to the people, concerning the wonderful works of our Lord, that He did them through the help of Satan. This kind of evil-speaking is to be put aside, on the one hand, and, on the other, as perhaps scarcely coming under the name, though it often leads to as much mischief as if it did, that insatiable appetite for making one's neighbour's affairs the staple of what is supposed to be conversation, which so greatly afflicts many people, and which, in another sense, so much more greatly afflicts those who are so unfortunate to be subjected to it. Our neighbours are very interesting to us, and so are their affairs, and of course the only way we can show our interest in them is by talking about them. We do not know everything about them, and some of the things we think we know about them we do not know at all, but we talk as if we did, and in the multitude of words there is pretty sure to be sin and wrong and injustice somewhere ; and so it comes, that though we have no feeling of

any kind *against* them, our too much talk *about* them often does them as much harm as if we had set ourselves to do it. Still, this is to be excluded from what we call evil-speaking; it is wanting in that element of conscious grudge or malice which, it appears, is the essential element of evil-speaking. There is thoughtlessness,—gross, sinful thoughtlessness; there is a cruel disregard of what may possibly be the result, as it affects the reputation and welfare of others; but so long as there is not the wilful, deliberate intention to injure by our speaking, our talk can scarcely be called evil-speaking. Out of the heart proceedeth evil-speakings, and the heart means the affections, and the intentions, and the motives, and our speaking is what our motive makes it—evil, if our motive is evil.

Evil-speaking then is to be confined to that form of maliciousness which, for the lurking purpose of doing an injury to its object, takes up and spreads an evil report. It may be sometimes by simply repeating what is really the truth concerning him; sometimes by exaggerating; sometimes by professing great regrets that so and so had been so far left to himself to do as he has unfortunately done, but it must not be mentioned, it is strictly confidential; sometimes by leaving out part of the story, which had it been told would have given a very different colour to the whole affair; sometimes by so arranging the truth as to make it do the work of a lie. But whatever be the form it takes, it consists of, and carries with it, more or less of the ill-will that takes up, and passes on, an ill-report against a neighbour or a brother.

Now, says the apostle, he that does this, he that speaketh against a brother, or judgeth a brother, speaketh against the law and judgeth the law. Observe, you cannot speak against him without judging him; at the foundation of every such speaking against there is a judgment: you have decided that he deserves that you should speak against him, and that he should suffer all that may come upon him as the result of your speaking against him. This is your judgment concerning his character and his deserts. Imagine anybody saying something evil of a neighbour without judging that neigh-

bour to deserve it should be said and all the evil consequences that are sure to follow ! It is often done ! That does not make it any the less irrational, though it may make it slightly the less wicked. If I say an ill thing of my neighbour, I judge him,—I judge him to be deserving of having it said, and of deserving to suffer all he shall suffer by its having been said.

It is possible to conceive a man, under the influence of a bitter, unforgiving grudge, assenting to all this, but it must surely be only when he is in such an unchristian, inhuman condition. Get him to confront this aggravation of his sin, this which surely even he must be blind to, *that he is speaking against the law and judging the law* ; that he is distinctly challenging the character, the holiness, and the love of God's law ; that he is judging it as a thing that is worthy to be condemned. A man would speak against his brother who would think twice before doing it if he just realised that he was speaking against and judging God's law. But a moment's reflection will show that it is so. The law is love, the spirit of it is love, the requirements of it are love. Well, if I am right in speaking against my brother (and I am right, else I would not do it), then I do not need to be very respectful to that law which contradicts what I am doing, I may say of it what I like, I do say of it what I like : it says, "love thy neighbour" ; I speak against him and, therefore, against it. Or we may take it this way : The law of God is far too strict ; if too strict, sinfully strict ; it condemns what I do not condemn, what I approve of, this speaking against my brother for example. If I do not approve of it, why do I persist in doing it ? But if I approve of it, then I judge and condemn what does not approve of it. But the law of God does not approve of it, abhors it, condemns it, punishes it ; well then I judge and condemn the law of God, and I regard it as unnecessarily punctilious in abhorring, and sinfully unjust in punishing. If I think it right to speak against a brother, I think the law of God is not what it ought to be : every time I speak against a brother I speak against God's law, I condemn God's law.

There is something far darker still. If thou judge the law, thou hast lifted thyself above the law, thou hast usurped the

throne of Him who gave the law; if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. Is it not so? If you decide that your neighbour deserves to have that story, true or false, told about him, and that he deserves to suffer all he shall suffer by its being told, are you not assuming the place of a judge? No wonder the apostle breaks off in indignant rebuke, "One is the Lawgiver and Judge who is able to save or to destroy, but then who art thou that judgest thy brother?"

Archbishop Whately invented what he called the "Game of Tradition." Ten or twelve people, old and young, seated round a room, play the game. "A story is whispered at one end of the circle and passed round to the other. *A* tells it softly in the ear of *B*; *B* communicates it to *C*; *C* to *D*; and so it goes on till it reaches *Z*, who tells it aloud for *A* to hear. It is then found that the story in the process of transit has so changed colour and features that *A* cannot recognise it."

In a thoughtless moment, without any ill intent, just to take part in the conversation, or to show how cleverly we could tell a story, we repeated one we had just heard about, of one who was well known to everybody present. There was no need to tell it, it would have been kind to let it lie forgotten, but we had just

recently heard it, nobody knew it but ourselves, and it would give us a little brief pre-eminence to tell it, and we told it with a kind of a sense of self-condemnation, but we did not mean any harm, we did not think of any injury as likely to follow, if we had we would not have told it.* Some who heard it told it over again; those who heard it repeated it in their turn, till one day, after it had hurt the reputation and lacerated the feelings of him we told it about, having heard somehow that we had had a hand in it, he one day came to us and asked if we had said so-and-so about him. We had forgotten all about it, the story as we heard it now from his lips was one we had never heard before, far less had told it about

* Henry Holbeach, Vol. 1, p. 133.

him: we were indignantly denying it when we remembered:—"Aye, and was this vile, calumnious thing the outcome of our thoughtless vanity that only wanted to tell a story well." Set a little stone rolling at the top of yon hill and it will kill the man at its foot. Tell the story to *A*, and when it comes to the *Z*-end it will be recited in the midst of murdered reputations and broken hearts. Let us speak not evil one of another: the end of these things may be death.

GLASGOW.

PETER RUTHERFORD.



SECTARIANISM.—"Every Christian sect has tried to realise the kingdom of God, but has failed. Every Christian sect, denomination, nation, represents, after all, only one side of Christianity. The High Church represents the feelings of the Christian heart; the Broad Church represents the breadth of liberal Christian thought; the Low Church, or Evangelical, represents that strong and firm faith which will not be satisfied till its cherished dogmas are brought to those nations who are in want of it; and the extremely philosophical school amongst Christians represents that side of Christianity which harmonises with metaphysical and scientific truth. Thus each section of Christ's Church represents a truth. . . . My object is not to become a convert to any of the sects in England; for if I hate idolatry, I also hate sectarianism. If I belong to one sect I become an enemy to another sect; if I identify myself with the rich I become an enemy to the poor; if I become the exclusive property, as it were, of one religious denomination, I shall necessarily become hostile to all other churches and sects. . . . Christians ought to be satisfied with the name 'Christian' if they wish to show that they are grateful to Jesus Christ for the light He communicated to them, and they should drop off all those distinctive titles which distinguish the various sects from each other. . . . I cannot but feel perplexed, and even amazed, amidst countless and quarrelling sects."—*Keshab Chandra Sen*.

GERMS OF PRACTICAL THOUGHT EVOLVED FROM
THE APOCALYPSE.

[The writer of these Homiletic Sketches aims not to decide between the numerous theories and speculations which the interpreters of this book have propounded. So far as his work is concerned it does not matter who the author may be, the exact time in which he lived, the place of his writing, or the peculiarities of his language. The whole book appears to his mind as a *grand, prophetic poem*, full of strange and grotesque symbols. As a prophecy, some have regarded it as *already fulfilled*, such as Grotius, Hammond, Bossuet, Calmet, Wetstein, Eichhorn, Hug, Herder, Ewald, Lücke, De Wette, Dusterdieck, Stuart, Lee, and Maurice. These are called the *Præterist* expositors. Some have regarded it as yet almost entirely *unfulfilled*. All events referred to, except those in the first three chapters, they take as pointing to what is yet to come. Among such interpreters in recent times are Drs. Todd, Maitland, Newton, De Burgh, &c. These are called *Futurists*. Some regard it as in a *progressive course* of fulfilment, running on from the first century to the end of time. Amongst these interpreters the following names are included: Mede, Sir I. Newton, Vitringa, Bengel, Woodhouse, Faber, E. B. Elliott, Wordsworth, Hengstenberg, Ebrard, &c. These are called *Historical* expositors. The present Homiletic Sketches will be drawn in the light of this school. The whole book is a symbolical representation of a great moral campaign between right and wrong, running on from the dawn of the Christian era to the crash of doom. Babylon here is, so to say, the metropolis of evil and Jerusalem the metropolis of good. The battle is not between the mere forms, organizations, and institutions of good and evil, but between their *spirit*, their essence. The victories of Christ here are, to use the language of Carpenter, "against all wrong-thoughtedness, wrong-heartedness, and wrong-spiritedness."]

No. XII.

The Words of Christ from Eternity to the Congregation
at Thyatira.

"AND UNTO THE ANGEL OF THE CHURCH IN THYATIRA WRITE; THESE THINGS SAITH THE SON OF GOD, WHO HATH HIS EYES LIKE UNTO A FLAME OF FIRE, AND HIS FEET ARE LIKE FINE BRASS; I KNOW THY WORKS, AND CHARITY, AND SERVICE, AND FAITH, AND THY PATIENCE, AND THY WORKS; AND THE LAST TO BE MORE THAN THE FIRST. NOTWITHSTANDING I HAVE A FEW THINGS AGAINST THEE, BECAUSE THOU SUFFEREST THAT WOMAN JEZEBEL, WHICH CALLETH HERSELF A PROPHETESS, TO TEACH AND TO SEDUCE MY SERVANTS TO COMMIT FORNICATION, AND TO EAT THINGS SACRIFICED UNTO IDOLS. AND I GAVE HER SPACE TO REPENT OF HER FORNICATION; AND SHE REPENTED NOT. BEHOLD, I WILL CAST HER INTO A BED, AND THEM THAT COMMIT ADULTERY WITH HER INTO GREAT TRIBULATION, EXCEPT THEY REPENT OF THEIR DEEDS. AND I WILL KILL HER CHILDREN WITH DEATH; AND ALL THE CHURCHES SHALL KNOW THAT I AM HE WHICH SEARCHETH THE REINS AND HEARTS: AND I WILL GIVE UNTO EVERY ONE OF YOU ACCORDING TO YOUR WORKS. BUT UNTO YOU I SAY, AND UNTO THE REST IN THYATIRA, AS MANY AS HAVE NOT THIS DOCTRINE, AND WHICH HAVE NOT KNOWN THE DEPTHS OF SATAN, AS THEY SPEAK; I WILL PUT UPON YOU NONE OTHER BURDEN. BUT THAT WHICH YE HAVE ALREADY HOLD FAST TILL I COME. AND HE THAT OVERCOMETH, AND KEEPETH MY WORKS UNTO THE END, TO HIM WILL I GIVE POWER OVER THE NATIONS: AND HE SHALL RULE THEM WITH A ROD OF IRON; AS THE VESSELS OF A POTTER SHALL THEY BE BROKEN TO SHIVERS: EVEN AS I RECEIVED OF MY FATHER. AND I WILL GIVE HIM THE MORNING STAR."—*Revelation* ii. 18-28.

THYATIRA was situated between Pergamos and Sardis, a little off the main road which

connected these two cities. It was a Macedonian colony, founded by Alexander the

Great after the overthrow of the Persian empire. The Macedonian colonists appear to have introduced the worship of Apollo, honoured as the Sun-god, under the name of Tyrumnas. It has been thought by some that the description here given of Christ—"the eyes of flame"—was selected in allusion to this worship of the Sun-god, under the form of some dazzlingly ornamented image. Certainly close commercial intercourse connected the daughter colony with its mother city. There seem to have been various mercantile guilds in the colony—bakers, potters, tanners, weavers, and dyers. The dye trade was, perhaps, the most important. Lydia, the seller of purple, was in all likelihood connected with the guild of dyers; and her appearance in Philippi is an illustration of the trade relations of Macedonia and Thyatira. To her the Christian community of Thyatira may have owed its beginning. "She who had gone forth for a while to buy and sell and get gain, when she returned home may have

brought home with her richer merchandise than any she had looked to obtain" (*Trench*). The population was of a mixed character, and included besides Asiatics, Macedonians, Italians, and Chaldeans. Of all the homiletic sketches on this epistle, we know of no sketch so clear and comprehensive, so philosophic and suggestive as that of the late Caleb Morris,—one of the greatest, if not *the* greatest preacher that has appeared in London during the century. Those whom the popular sentiment designates "princes of preachers" seem to me to shrink into contempt in his presence. "There are," he says, "four things in this epistle to which we shall call attention—the commendable in character, the reprehensible in doctrine, the indispensable in duty, and the blessed in destiny." How forcibly every item in this epistle is brought out by these four general divisions!* To attempt a plan equal to this in all points of excellence would be presumption. Albeit as it would be supererogatory and useless to repeat what others

have said, I shall endeavour to bring all the important elements of the chapter under one general heading,—*the moral character of mankind*; and here we have it in three aspects.

I.—AS THAT IN WHICH CHRIST FEELS THE PROFOUND-EST INTEREST. He who is here called the “Son of God,” no doubt feels an interest in every part of the great universe; but material worlds and systems, methinks, concern Him not so much as the moral character of God’s spiritual offspring. In souls His interest is profound, practical, and permanent. Two remarks are suggested—

First: *His interest springs from an absolute knowledge of the primary elements of character.* “I know thy works”; and again He says, “I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts.” He peers into those spheres of mind into which the vulture’s eye cannot pierce, no, nor the keenest eye of angelic intelligence; the sphere where character is generated, where its elements float in invisible germs; the arena where the moral battles are fought, where

victories are won and defeats endured. Our interest in objects is often blind, and so it often happens that we are entranced with admiration for objects which we learn from sad experience to be worthless, base, and abhorrent. Not so with Christ, He knows what *character* really is, its elements whether good or bad. Another remark we make is—

Secondly: *His interest fills Him with the deepest concern for the progress of the good.* “I know thy works, and charity (*thy love*), and service, and faith (*and ministry*), and thy patience.” “Charity” and “service”—love and its administrations; “faith” and “patience”—faith in its practical endurance; and all these in their progressive development, and “the last to be more than the first.” Moral goodness wherever it exists is *progressive*. Unlike all other life the more it grows the more the craving and the more the capability for growth. “From glory to glory,” &c. Another aspect in which we have the moral character of mankind is—

II.—AS THAT WHICH IS TRANSMITTED FROM GENERA-

TION TO GENERATION. In the long black roll of human infamy there is not a blacker name than that of Jezebel, the wife of Ahab. She was "the great seducer to idolatry in the later history of Israel, and as the worship of the Phœnician Astarte, or Venus, was accompanied with the grossest impurity, her name became the synonym of all that was debasing and profligate." Some suppose that this Jezebel in Thyatira, who embodied the character of the old Israelitish, fiendish idolatress, was the wife of the bishop of the congregation at Thyatira. It might be so, for many a worthy bishop has been matrimonially linked to a Jezebelitish woman. Aye, what is worse, many a Jezebelitish woman, married, has entrapped young unmarried bishops to their disgrace and ruin. But I am disposed to regard the name here as symbolical of some proud persecuting, self-constituted authority on religion, haughtily vaunting claims of superior religious piety and theological intelligence.

Now upwards of three thousand years had passed

away since Jezebel, the wife of Ahab, ended her execrable history and passed into the retributive future; yet her *character* appears in Thyatira, breathing the same passions and repeating the same conduct as of yore. Thus moral character is transmitted. I enquire not into the philosophy of this patent and awful fact in human history, nor into its moral propriety; certain we are that in the present generation the same characters appear as in the generation that lived before the flood. We offer three remarks on the transmission of moral character, as suggested by the letter before us.

First: *The transmitted character does not free the possessor from its responsibility.* The party here addressed, whether an individual, a faction, or a community, is spoken of as responsible; aye, and it would seem that even the bishop of the church had not a little responsibility for the existence of this Jezebelitish character—a character that used its influence on the side of ungodliness, licentiousness, and adultery. The grand mission of Christly men is to expel

evil from the community, to crush the wrong, not by force and persecution, but by Divine moral suasion and high Christian example. The work of a Christly man is to slay with the sword of the Spirit all the moral Jezebels within his reach. But whilst the disciples of Christ are held to some extent responsible for the existence of bad characters in its midst, the characters themselves are conscious of their responsibility. The fact that they inherit the bad temper and principles of their ancestors, however near or distant, does not relieve them from the remorseful consciousness that they are the authors of their own character. Every pang of remorse, every tear of compunction, every sigh of moral regret demonstrate to the greatest sinner that he is the author of his own vile character, and no other. Another remark which we offer on the transmission of moral character, as here suggested, is—

Secondly: *The transmitted character might be got rid of by its possessor.* “I gave her space (*time that she should*) to repent of her fornication;

and she repented not (*willeth not to repent of her fornication*).” Even the wickedest person, man or woman, has time given him for repentance. God hates nothing that He has made. He wills not the death of any sinner, but rather that he should turn and be saved, should repent and live. It was so even with the immoral person here spoken of, time was given her; but she would not use it. There was no will to repent. Therefore, for the sake of others, the time must now be shortened, and after one more trial judgment must follow. Repentance is the method of ridding oneself of a bad character, and this repentance every man can and ought to accomplish. Men are not machines or automaton, but free agents. The will is the rudder of the soul, it either steers the ship into the wished for haven, or drives on to shoals and quicksands. Another remark which we offer on the transmission of moral character, as here suggested, is—

Thirdly: *The transmitted character might entail enormous evils on others.* In truth all evil characters must

do so. "And I will kill her children with death." All have their moral offspring, children like unto themselves. The evil propagates the evil as the good the good. "No man liveth unto himself." Our moral children do our work, and that work is like that of Jezebel. Who knows the injury that the moral children of Jezebel did to the bishop and Christian community of Thyatira? They encouraged licentiousness and idolatry, and committed fornication, and ate things "sacrificed unto (to) idols." Another aspect in which we have the moral character of mankind is—

III.—AS THAT WHICH DETERMINES THE DESTINY OF MANKIND. Here mark two things.

First: *The outcome of the bad.* "Behold, I will (do) cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds (*her works*)." The chamber of voluptuousness shall become the chamber of torture, "and I will kill her children with death." Those in whom she has propagated her foul character,

under the cover of higher piety and deeper intelligence, shall meet with destruction. Death shall be their fate—the death of all that makes life worth having. "The wages of sin is death." "Be not deceived, God is not mocked, whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." "I will give unto every one of you according to your works"; your works shall determine your doom. Mark—

Secondly: *The outcome of the good.* Three great blessings are here stated as coming to such. (1) Freedom from future suffering. "But unto (to) you I say, and unto (to) the rest in (*that are in*) Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine (*teaching*), and which (*know not*) have not known the depths (*deep things*) of Satan, as they speak (*say*); I will (*cast*) put upon you none other burden." Whilst those whose impious Gnosticism, intolerant spirit, and gross sensuality would meet with anguish and death, all who were free from these abominations would be secure from future evil. "I will put (*cast*) upon you none other burden." You need not apprehend any

future evil. Elsewhere we are told that "He will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Him." Another blessing is (2) Elevation to true royalty. "But (*howbeit*) that which ye have already hold fast till I come." Those who hold fast with an unrelaxing grasp all the good they had, triumphed over evil, and held on loyally "to the end," shall have power over the nations. What power? Moral power, power over the minds and hearts of nations. He only is the true sovereign who governs minds and hearts. All other sovereignties are shams. The morally right has in it the highest elements of might. Right is might, and there is none other. "He shall rule them with a rod of iron." Right is a rod of iron unbreakable and all-crushing, dashing to pieces, shivering into atoms all the kingdoms of error and wrong. He is the greatest king of his age who has the most truth and goodness in his soul; hence the "saints one day shall judge the world." Hail the period, merciful heaven hasten

it! Another blessing is (3) Inheritance of the highest possession. "I will give him the morning star." "Morning star,"—bright harbinger of a day whose skies shall have no cloud, whose atmosphere no storm, whose sun shall rise and set no more. Christ Himself is the "morning star." This is the title He gives Himself: "I Jesus am the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star." The good man shall have Christ, and possessing Him shall have more than the universe itself. "All things are yours," &c.

So that out of the moral character of mankind will bloom their paradise or flame their hell. Therefore what we have good in us let us not only "hold fast" but nourish into higher developments. Let us so cultivate the "divine tree" that its roots shall deepen, its fibres strengthen, its branches multiply, its foliage become more magnificent, and its fruits more abundant every day.

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

LONDON.

Seedlings.

The Mind of Man and the Mind of God.

"THERE ARE MANY DEVICES IN A MAN'S HEART; NEVERTHELESS THE COUNSEL OF THE LORD, THAT SHALL STAND."—*Proverbs* xix. 21.

THESE words bring under our notice the mind of man and the mind of God. Man has a mind, or rather *is* mind. He is spiritual, rational, free, moral, immortal. God is mind. He is a spirit. Man's mind is the offspring of the Divine, so far as there is a resemblance between them. But the difference is infinite. The verse implies—

I.—That the mind of man has "MANY DEVICES"; the mind of God has but ONE COUNSEL. "There are many devices in a man's heart." Every man's soul teems with devices concerning pleasure, commerce, politics, religion. These "devices" are often selfish, ambitious, malignant, impious. As they are generated by different dispositions of heart, they have no *unity* amongst themselves; they are often in fierce battle, and fill the soul with confusion. But the mind of God has *one* purpose, "the counsel of the Lord." All God's thoughts are but phases of one eternal

purpose, that takes in the universe, and runs through the ages. The verse implies—

II.—That the mind of man is SUBORDINATE, the mind of God SUPREME. This is implied here, and fully expressed in many other places in the Bible. "A man's heart deviseth the way, but the Lord directeth his steps." (1) This is a fact well attested by history. The "devices" of Joseph's brethren He subordinated to His own purpose. The "devices" of Pharaoh to destroy all the tribes of Israel were, through the preservation of Moses, subordinated to the working out of God's purpose in the emancipation of the Jews from Egyptian thralldom. The "devices" of the Scribes and Pharisees, leading to the crucifixion of the Son of God, were overruled for the development of His "determinate counsel." The passing of the fugitive law, which required every American citizen to deliver up the fleeing African into the hands of his pursuers,

and which was passed in order to strengthen the dominion of slavery, led, under God, to the production of such literature on the question, as snapped the chains of four million human beings and made them free citizens of the world.

(2) This is a fact that reveals the greatness of God. I see the greatness of God in controlling the material universe, but I see more of His greatness in controlling the hostile elements of moral mind than in directing the elements of nature. "He maketh the wrath of men to praise Him." It has been said that Psalm civ. is a hymn to God in material nature, and Psalm cv. a hymn to Him in human history. The verse implies—

III.—That the mind of man is CHANGEABLE, the mind of God UNALTERABLE. "The counsel of the Lord, that shall stand." However numerous "devices" are, let them be as the sand on the sea-shore, or the drops that make up the ocean, however antagonistic to the Divine mind, however skilfully organised and backed by all the battalions of hell and earth, they will not shake God's "counsel." They will no more affect His purpose than a whiff of smoke can shake the stars. "There is no wisdom, nor understanding, nor counsel against the Lord."

CONCLUSION.—Learn (1) the in-

evitable fall of all that is opposed to the will of God. Whatever in systems and institutions, whatever in commerce, politics, or religion, whatever in Church or State is opposed to the "counsel of the Lord," must inevitably totter and fall. And learn (2) the inevitable fulfilment of all His promises. Whatever He has purposed shall be accomplished. His eternal counsel moves on, nothing can hinder it. All the volcanoes, thunders, lightnings, tornadoes, united together on this earth, and shaking it to its centre, cannot hinder for one instant the sun in his majestic march, nor can all the opposition of earth and hell united prevent the Eternal accomplishing all the promises of His word.

"There is a power unseen, that rules
the illimitable world ;
That guides its motions, from the
brightest star
To the least dust of this sin-stained
mould ;
While man, who madly deems him-
self the lord
Of all, is nought but weakness and
dependence.
This sacred trust, by dire experience
taught,
Thou must have learnt when wander-
ing all alone :
Each bird, each insect, flitting
through the sky,
Was more sufficient for itself than
thou."—*Thompson*.

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Eutychus Falling into a Deep Sleep.

"AND UPON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK, WHEN THE DISCIPLES CAME TOGETHER TO BREAK BREAD, PAUL PREACHED UNTO THEM, READY TO DEPART ON THE MORROW; AND CONTINUED HIS SPEECH UNTIL MIDNIGHT. AND THERE WERE MANY LIGHTS IN THE UPPER CHAMBER, WHERE THEY WERE GATHERED TOGETHER. AND THERE SAT IN A WINDOW A CERTAIN YOUNG MAN NAMED EUTYCHUS, BEING FALLEN INTO A DEEP SLEEP: AND AS PAUL WAS LONG PREACHING, HE SUNK DOWN WITH SLEEP, AND FELL DOWN FROM THE THIRD LOFT, AND WAS TAKEN UP DEAD. AND PAUL WENT DOWN, AND FELL ON HIM, AND EMBRACING HIM SAID, TROUBLE NOT YOURSELVES; FOR HIS LIFE IS IN HIM. WHEN HE THEREFORE WAS COME UP AGAIN, AND HAD BROKEN BREAD, AND EATEN, AND TALKED A LONG WHILE, EVEN TILL BREAK OF DAY, SO HE DEPARTED. AND THEY BROUGHT THE YOUNG MAN ALIVE, AND WERE NOT A LITTLE COMFORTED."—*Acts xx. 7-12.*

SAILING from Philippi across the *Ægean Sea*, Paul reaches Troas, a city of Phrygia, on the Hellespont, between Troy, north, and Asia, south. In this region the events recorded in the "*Iliad*" of Homer are supposed to have occurred. The verses now before us, briefly sketching as they do his work at Troas, and recording the striking event connected with Eutychus, present to us some remarks connected with religious institutions. We have here—

I.—RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS SANCTIONED BY CHRISTIANITY. "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them." Here are three *religious institutions* sanctioned by Paul—(1) *The first day*

of the week. This is the first account we have of the Christian Church observing this day. From this time down to the present, "the first day of the week" has been observed for religious purposes (1 Cor. xvi. 2; Rev. i. 10). It is a wise ordination that the day on which the resurrection of Christ took place the grand fact of redemption should be thus employed. (2) *The Lord's Supper.* The disciples came together to "break bread." This evidently refers to the eucharistic bread (Acts ii. 46). This is an ordinance which Christ Himself instituted "the night on which He was betrayed." It has been observed by the Church through all ages to the present hour. (3) *The preaching of the Gospel.* "Paul

preached unto them." Preaching is a *Divine* institution. Christ gave the commission after His resurrection, and after His ascension He sent down His Spirit to qualify men for the work. In meeting together, therefore, on "the first day of the week, and breaking bread" to commemorate the sufferings of Christ, and preaching the Gospel, we are doing what the apostles sanctioned by their example, and what the good have attended to during eighteen centuries. We have here—

II.—RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS INTRUDING ON THE CLAIMS OF NATURE. "Paul continued his speech until midnight." Night is the time for rest, not for labour. The body, exhausted with the activities of the day, requires the re-invigorating repose of night. Hence, as Paul was pushing the religious services beyond their proper limits, one of the hearers (Eutychus) fell asleep, and "fell down and was taken up dead." Many reasons would, perhaps, justify Paul in thus protracting his discourse. The people were very ignorant on the most vital of all questions. He had much to communicate. His heart was full of sympathy, and he had to depart on the morrow. Still, as this intruded on the claims of nature, a result occurred which marked

such *long services* as an evil. It is remarkable that no fault is found with Eutychus. He could not help it. Perhaps his body was overtasked: his spirit might have been willing, but his flesh was weak, and he gave way. Religious institutions intrude on the claims of nature (1) *when they are employed for the purposes of inordinate excitement*. The history of what was called "the revival" in Ireland and elsewhere a few years ago, furnishes many sad examples. They intrude on the claims of nature (2) *when they are protracted beyond a certain period*. Long sermons are a sin against nature. More than half the sermons preached are somnific. Were there many in every congregation who had to sit like Eutychus, "in a window," during the services, instead of in seats well secured, what accidental deaths would be reported in our journals! Many modern preachers, under such circumstances, would make the sexton busy. We have here—

III.—RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH SUPERNATURAL POWER. "And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him." This was an undoubted miracle, performed in somewhat the same manner as that which Elisha wrought on the Shunamite's son (2 Kings iv. 33-35).

This miracle may be regarded as emblematic of that Divine power of restoration which is associated with the preaching of the Gospel. (1) Man is the *organ* of it. God could have raised Eutychus directly without the intervention of Paul or of any secondary instrument. But He worked through Paul; so

in quickening dead sinners now He employs the ministry of the Word. (2) Man is the *subject* of it. Eutychus was raised. God brings the supernatural power of restoration to bear upon man through man.

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Paul Longing to Preach Christ in Rome.

"FOR I LONG TO SEE YOU, THAT I MAY IMPART UNTO YOU SOME SPIRITUAL GIFT, TO THE END YE MAY BE ESTABLISHED; THAT IS, THAT I MAY BE COMFORTED TOGETHER WITH YOU BY THE MUTUAL FAITH BOTH OF YOU AND ME. NOW I WOULD NOT HAVE YOU IGNORANT, BRETHREN, THAT OFTENTIMES I PURPOSED TO COME UNTO YOU, (BUT WAS LET HITHERTO,) THAT I MIGHT HAVE SOME FRUIT AMONG YOU ALSO, EVEN AS AMONG OTHER GENTILES. I AM DEBTOR BOTH TO THE GREEKS, AND TO THE BARBARIANS; BOTH TO THE WISE, AND TO THE UNWISE. SO, AS MUCH AS IN ME IS, I AM READY TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO YOU THAT ARE AT ROME ALSO."—*Rom. i. 11-15.*

PAUL desired earnestly to visit Rome. He was hindered once and again. At length he went, but as a prisoner. Thus "man proposes but God disposes." Prayer is answered, but not according to the letter of it.

I.—THE AIM OF CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP SHOULD BE MUTUAL PROFIT. What was it in the days when the soul of David was "knit to" the soul of Jonathan; in Malachi's, when "they that feared the Lord spake often one to

another"; in Daniel's, when the young princes and nobles strengthened each other to stand fast in God; in the days when the disciples continued "steadfast in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship"?

The great apostle, distinguished by his call, his abilities, his devotion to his Master's work, his arduous, noble service, wishes to do good to these believers at Rome, and to receive good from them.

II.—THE BELIEVER SHOULD NOT REST SATISFIED WITH HIS

OWN PERSONAL SALVATION. Do we then undervalue the endeavour of each to secure the safety of his soul? Far from us be the thought! Lot, escape for thy life! Alarmed sinner, run to yonder wicket-gate!

But we are "debtors." Sacred obligations are laid on us, even as they were on this apostle. He was a "debtor both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise." And we are "debtors" to the humble, the little, the obscure, the poor, the sick. Paul would have been neither ashamed nor afraid to preach the gospel before Cæsar himself. He preached it boldly before Felix, Festus, Agrippa. But, like his Master, he loved to speak to "the common people."

III.—THE EARNEST SPIRIT AND ATTITUDE OF THE APOSTLE SHOULD BE IMITATED. *Semper paratus.* Ready, aye, ready. To the utmost of his opportunity, and to the utmost of his power—"ready." "Ready," not to enjoy the sights of the splendid capital of the world, but to preach the gospel. Blucher received the *soubriquet* of Marshal Vorwärtz. "Ready" and "Forward" may be our watchwords. Have you ever heard the retreat sounded? Nay, "Forward," cries the captain of the sacramental host of God's elect—"Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."

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Days of the Christian Year.

John iv. 46-54.

(*Twenty-first Sunday after Trinity.*)

MANY lessons spring from this most interesting incident. Among them we may gather—

I.—THE UNDISTINGUISHING KINDNESS OF CHRIST. Not, indeed, that He does not distinguish between the special necessities of one of His disciples and those of another, but that he does not allow any of our distinctions to interrupt

the full flow of His beneficence. He went to heal the centurion's slave: He now heals by His word the nobleman's son. The lines of separation we draw, and too much observe, are absolutely nothing to Him; they do not enter into His consideration. (Col. iii. 11.)

II.—THE IMPORTUNITY OF PARENTAL LOVE. Our Lord uses words of apparent if not actual severity (verse 48). They may

not have applied—I think they did not—to this anxious father; *he* did not want to “see a sign” but to secure a favour. But the remark of Christ was apart from his purpose, and threatened to lead to a conversation if not to a prolonged discussion. So the father breaks boldly in with his prayer, begging the Lord to prefer his particular exigency to any general uses, and urges his request. Parental love is a thing which is not to be postponed, which should not be daunted, which *will* not be discouraged, much less denied: when seeking the highest good for its objects it should be importunate until it is successful.

III.—THE BEST INCENTIVE TO CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP. In our Lord’s day this was not miraculous power (ver. 48, and see John xiv. 11), but Christ’s own character. In our day it is not the wonderful things Christianity has done, but the transcendent claims Christ has on our reverence and love, and his willingness and power to meet the deeper necessities and to satisfy the higher aspirations of our souls.

IV.—THE RELIABLENESS OF CHRIST’S WORD OF PROMISE. The father, so far from lacking faith, believed that Jesus could do His work of power even at a distance, and “went his way” in peace and hope. And he was not dis-

appointed; nay, he found that, at the very hour of promise, that was done which he looked for, and *even more* than that. For not only did his child “begin to amend,” but at that very time “the fever left him.” Christ will do more than fulfil His word to us; not, indeed, in granting sooner what we ask, in the precise way we are expecting; but in His own better time and in His own much better way, in a time and way which will work our truest welfare, He will be better than His word.

V.—THE ADVANCING CHARACTER OF CHRISTIAN FAITH. “The man believed the word,” &c. (ver. 50). “And himself believed” (ver. 53). From believing Christ’s word his faith passed on, passed *down*, into a cordial acceptance of Christ Himself, into that living faith in a Divine One which ended in something more and better than the curing of a fever. The more we have to do with Christ the more our faith will advance. It may commence in a feeling which is very humble, hardly spiritual at all; but if we continue in His service, it will deepen and grow, and bring forth fairer flower and richer fruit, with added privilege and opening opportunity.

VI.—THE BLESSED ISSUE OF WELL-USED AFFLICTION. There was sickness and, therefore, sorrow in the home: but it led to a visit

to the Divine Healer who was also the Divine Teacher and Friend; and the end of it was a new family-life, a life in God, a common inheritance in the blessedness which no after-evils of any kind could disturb. Such an issue will sorrow always have when it leads us, with docile heart, to the feet of Heavenly Wisdom, to the source of Eternal Life.

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Hebrews iii. 1.

(*Twenty-second Sunday after Trinity.*)

“CONSIDER JESUS.”

OTHER religions may make much of ideas, Christianity makes most of a Person. Some forms of Christianity may make much of a Church, Scriptural Christianity makes most of The Christ. Of this Person, this Christ, this instructive epistle has to speak, using figures, that it may be are often more full of meaning to the Jewish than to the English mind. But, whatever be the figures employed, the effect sought to be produced is the same as that of Paul and of Peter and of James and John in their epistles; it is to make known and to magnify The Christ. Let every sheaf bow; let sun and moon and eleven stars make obeisance. Christ is Christianity. “Consider Jesus.”

I.—“Consider” THE MANIFOLD REVELATIONS OF THE CHRIST. The writer of this epistle is reminding his readers that our Lord is the Sent, the Priest, the Leader; in other words the Moses, the Aaron, the Joshua of human souls. This threefold revelation of Him, by so many *names*, is but in keeping with the revelation of Himself in so many *discourses*, by so many *works*, and above all in so many *events*. When a man is fired with Paul’s desire about Christ, “that I may know Him,” he is eager to study the many-sided revelation of our Lord Himself.

II.—“Consider” THE MANIFOLD ADAPTEDNESS OF THE CHRIST TO HUMAN WANTS. There is no season in the history of the soul in which He is not needed, and in which, therefore, we may forget to “consider” Him. He is the Sun of man’s day, the Star of his night. He is his Bread in hunger, his Living Water in thirst, his Teacher in ignorance, his Comforter in sorrow, his Saviour in sin. Love, Joy, Duty, Death, all need Him.

III.—“Consider” THE MANIFOLD CLAIMS OF THE CHRIST ON HUMAN HOMAGE AND SERVICE. He is the supremely TRUE whom we are bound to trust, the supremely GOOD whom we are bound to love, the supremely PERFECT whom we are bound to worship. Such lines

of meditation as these, and a thousand more all converging on one point, command us, constrain us, compel us to "consider Jesus."

EDITOR.

Hebrews viii. 10.

(*Twenty-third Sunday after Trinity.*)

"I WILL PUT MY LAWS INTO THEIR MIND, AND ON THEIR HEART ALSO WILL I WRITE THEM."

WHATEVER we believe about a Bible *for* man, it is clear that Old and New Testament writers believed also in a Bible *in* man. Indeed, all the great realities of Christianity, as an outward system or history, have their counterpart in Christian experience. Thus with the birth of Christ; He is to "be born in you, the Hope of glory." Thus too of Resurrection and Ascension. And thus concerning the Bible; for though we put into circulation a million copies of Holy Scripture, what the better are men unless Holy Scripture be "put into their mind," and written on their hearts. Every true Christian is an embodied Bible, printed, bound, circulated. Noting the analogies and contrasts between the written Scriptures of our Bible, and the embodied Scriptures in a godly life, we observe—

I.—BOTH HAVE A WRITER AND READERS. The *Writer* is God. For whether it be in the tran-

scribing true teachings for the Book, or the producing holy impressions on human lives, men are but the agents, the penmen, God is the great Source of all that is lofty in thought and pure in life. If "holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," it is as indubitably certain that all strong, gracious, devoted Christian souls trace to God whatever virtues they possess. How, we may not always discern, but sometimes directly, and sometimes indirectly, God puts laws into the mind and writes them upon the heart with unmistakeable legibility and indelible impression. The *Readers* are many. Many, in many languages, read the written, printed Bible; but myriads more, in the universal character of daily life, read the embodied Scriptures. "Living epistles" are known and read of all men. The sage and the little child, the savage and the philosopher, are, perhaps, equally apt students of the literature of human conduct.

II.—THE EMBODIED SCRIPTURES ARE MORE LEGIBLE, CONVINCING, AND PERMANENT THAN THE WRITTEN SCRIPTURES. Our argument is not a disparagement of the written Scriptures, but an exaltation of the embodied Scriptures. For are they not (1) more *legible*? No lexicon needed there; no commentary in demand. Honesty,

purity, kindness, do not involve grammars, and exegesis, and theologies. (2) More *convincing*. Truth in sentences, specially such sentences as John's, or Paul's or of our Lord, is convincing; but truth in a single action, and consistently enshrined in a whole course of conduct, is far more convincing. "The life is the light of men." (3) More *permanent*. Pages can be torn; Bibles burnt. The figures of speech, the modes of thought become antiquated, not to say obsolete. But living goodness is fresh as a constant dawn, a perennial springtide.

CONCLUSION.—Study both books God is writing for you; the outward and inward Scriptures.

EDITOR.

James ii. 14-26.

(*Twenty-fourth Sunday after Trinity.*)

"WHAT DOTH IT PROFIT, MY BRETHREN, THOUGH A MAN SAY HE HATH FAITH, AND HAVE NOT WORKS? CAN FAITH SAVE HIM? IF A BROTHER OR SISTER BE NAKED, AND DESTITUTE OF DAILY FOOD, AND ONE OF YOU SAY UNTO THEM, DEPART IN PEACE, BE YE WARMED AND FILLED; NOTWITHSTANDING YE GIVE THEM NOT THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE NEEDFUL TO THE BODY; WHAT DOTH IT PROFIT? EVEN SO FAITH, IF IT HATH NOT WORKS, IS DEAD, BEING ALONE. YEA, A MAN MAY SAY, THOU HAST FAITH, AND I HAVE WORKS: SHEW ME THY FAITH WITHOUT THY WORKS, AND I WILL SHEW THEE MY FAITH BY MY WORKS. THOU BELIEVEST THAT THERE IS ONE GOD; THOU DOEST WELL: THE DEVILS ALSO BELIEVE, AND TREMBLE. BUT WILT THOU KNOW, O VAIN MAN, THAT FAITH WITHOUT WORKS IS DEAD? WAS NOT ABRAHAM OUR FATHER

JUSTIFIED BY WORKS, WHEN HE HAD OFFERED ISAAC HIS SON UPON THE ALTAR? SEEST THOU HOW FAITH WROUGHT WITH HIS WORKS, AND BY WORKS WAS FAITH MADE PERFECT? AND THE SCRIPTURE WAS FULFILLED WHICH SAITH, ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS IMPUTED UNTO HIM FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS: AND HE WAS CALLED THE FRIEND OF GOD. YE SEE THEN HOW THAT BY WORKS A MAN IS JUSTIFIED, AND NOT BY FAITH ONLY. LIKEWISE ALSO WAS NOT RAHAB THE HARLOT JUSTIFIED BY WORKS, WHEN SHE HAD RECEIVED THE MESSENGERS, AND HAD SENT THEM OUT ANOTHER WAY? FOR AS THE BODY WITHOUT THE SPIRIT IS DEAD, SO FAITH WITHOUT WORKS IS DEAD ALSO."

THE faith condemned here is a spurious faith,—“if a man say he hath faith”; the faith enjoined is a genuine faith.

I.—SPURIOUS FAITH. Concerning this spurious or semblant faith we are here led to notice that it has three distinguishing faults, either of which is enough to condemn it, the three together render it completely accursed. (1) It has *no energy*. It is simply and utterly inoperative. “Without works.” (2) It is *without benefit*. The satire here is very cutting that describes spurious faith as simply saying to the naked and the homeless, “be clothed, be warmed,” and effects nothing whatever for their good. (3) It has *no merit*. Demons have it. All it does, whether for the demons or the orthodox, is to make them “shudder.”

II.—GENUINE FAITH. The true faith that, quite as much as

Habbakuk or Paul, James enjoins (though he scathes spurious faith with more force than they had done), is recognisable by the very opposite characteristics to those of its counterfeit. (1) *It ever finds practical expression.* The true believer ever says, not with lips but in his daily conduct, in all the crises of his life, "I will show my faith *by my works*." *E.g.*, Abraham, &c. (2) *It is essentially beneficial.* (a) *On a man's self.* By it he realises that he is "a friend of God"; by it, too, his character is developed, for "by works is faith made perfect." (b) *On society.* It tells for good on others. *E.g.*, Rahab and the messengers. Such living faith is of incalculable advantage to the individual soul and to society.

EDITOR.

Matthew xxi. 1.

(*First Sunday in Advent.*)

It is not difficult to find reasons for the selection of the "Palm-entry" as the subject for the Gospel of to-day. There are points of difference yet also of similarity between our Lord's entry into Jerusalem and His "Advent" into this world. The Collect for the day gives us the key, for it speaks of a wonderful combination of humanity and divinity, humility and divinity, the temporal and the eternal.

Note the similarity: *e.g.*, (a) *the human and Divine.* Christ the Teacher, &c.: as a mere man entering Jerusalem. Still what proofs of divinity as seen in His superhuman knowledge as to the existence, &c., of the ass in the neighbouring village. Christ "the first begotten" of the Father: before all worlds, &c. Born at Bethlehem, subject to all the limitations of our nature, &c. (b) *Lowly yet majestic.* With what signs and surroundings of lowliness Christ entered Jerusalem. But yet He was in the highest sense a King. So with the first Advent. (c) *The temporal and the eternal.* In both instances there were remarkable fulfilments of ancient prophecies. Consider this passage as—

I.—DECLARING CERTAIN TRUTHS CONCERNING CHRIST. Every incident in our Lord's life declares certain special truths. Combining them, we then see the harmony and greatness of His character. Here we get truths concerning (1) *His nature.* (a) *Super-human knowledge* (point out proofs here given of this). (b) *The greatness of His claims:* He sent His disciples for the "ass" whereon He should ride. The Lord had need. What a combination of authority and yet poverty. (c) *The perfection of His emotional nature.* He gave

Himself up for a time to the joyfulness of the hour. He did rejoice. He entered into the enthusiasm of the multitude. But still He saw the depths beneath, &c. He could weep also at what was a just cause for sorrow. (c) *His calmness and self-repression.* He could have been crowned King. He might have led on the people to higher bursts and deeds of enthusiasm. But He repressed all this. He came to die. (2) *His influence.* As in other cases, and through all His history on earth, and even in His spiritual ministrations now, there was (a) *attraction.* Multitudes brought into His train. Loud rejoicing, gladsome songs. How Christ attracts now. In every department He is drawing men, &c. (b) *Repulsion.* Opposition of the Pharisees. So still. (illustrate.)

II.—ILLUSTRATES CERTAIN PHASES OF HUMANITY. (1) *Gladly enthusiastic.* Wonderful sight to see a vast crowd swayed by deep feeling. Here an enthusiastic multitude aroused upon a spiritual subject. (2) *Bitterly malignant.* Not all in that assembly were favourable to Christ. There were those plotting His death. (3) *Stolidly neutral.* Those who would not commit themselves to either side. (4) *The fickle.* What a change in a

short time passed over the crowd. Contrast now and the time when they cried, "Crucify," &c. So the same classes to-day are seen in everything relating to religious and spiritual life and truth. (Apply this.) Cf. "Julius Cæsar," Act III., sc. 2nd, for illustration.

III.—SYMBOLIZES CERTAIN SPIRITUAL FACTS. This entry into Jerusalem symbolizes many things specially bearing upon the truths we consider this Advent. We now call to mind the *Advents* of Christ. Christ *has* come, *is* coming, and *will* come. See how these facts are here symbolized. As regards (a) *the historical past.* Christ has come into this world. Came in our nature, with majesty and humility. (b) *The visible present.* He *is* still coming. He is still going on His kingly procession through this world. He is still entering into our *individual, social, and national* life. (c) *The unrevealed future.* He will come again. A certain prophetic fact linked on to the historical fact. He will come to *reign, purify, destroy*, and to receive a redeemed world's glad tribute of praise. Receive, then, this coming King now with *devotion of heart, reverence of grateful wonder*, and the *willing offerings* of heart and life.

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Breviaries.

The Latent Spiritual Force in Man.

"WHEREFORE I PUT THEE IN REMEMBRANCE THAT THOU STIR UP THE GIFT OF GOD, WHICH IS IN THEE BY THE PUTTING ON OF MY HANDS."—
2 Timothy i. 6.

THE Apostle here speaks of some divine gift, "*the gift of God*," that was in Timothy. This "*gift*" it would seem, in this case, was something distinct from those natural faculties and susceptibilities which are in every mind, and which in all cases are God's gifts. It was something that seems to have been conferred on Timothy by Paul, and that by the putting on of Paul's hands. In Paul's first Epistle to Timothy, chapter iv., verse 14, we have these words, "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of hands of the presbytery." What could Paul or any of the apostles convey into the mind of another by the "laying on of hands" upon the head? Was it some electric impulse? This undoubtedly would be possible. Science recognises the possibility. Or was it some moral virtue, some spiritual grace? We cannot see the possibility of this. Moral virtues are generated within and never bestowed from without. Whatever the "*laying on*" of apostolic hands on others effected, all history shows that the "*laying on*" of hands by the ministers of any church, Popish or Protestant, Conformist or Nonconformist, have no such power now, and the practice of it must be regarded as a miserable mimicry, a crafty priestliness. One thing is clear, that the human mind itself, with all its wonderful mental and moral possibilities, is the "*gift of God*." Looking at it in this light the text suggests two remarks. I.—THAT THERE IS IN MAN SOME SPIRITUAL FORCE WHICH IS IN A SPECIAL SENSE "THE GIFT OF GOD." Indeed, our very existence, with all its physical and mental attributes, is His gift. But this spiritual force is something special, and it may be said to comprehend at least three elements. First, The sentiment of *religious worship*. Man has been called a religious animal. He has not only within him the capability for worship, but a craving for worship. Faith in a supreme existence comes not to him by evidence, but by birth, it is inbred. Hence everywhere he has his God

and his shrines. This spiritual force comprehends—Secondly, The sentiment of *moral obligation*. He has an inbred feeling that there is an authority over him to which he owes allegiance, that there are laws which he should recognise and obey. In fact he has a consciousness of power within him which concerns itself not merely with the truth or falsehood of propositions, the expediency or in expediency of conduct, but with the right and wrong of actions. This spiritual force comprehends—Thirdly, The sentiment of *social love*. The social love is something more than gregariousness, than mere animal sympathy, which seem to belong to all sentient life. It is benevolence, a well-wishing for the race. This is in man's nature, though, alas, sadly perverted. I am speaking of these sentiments as they are in their essence, not in their use or abuse; they are the very spiritual core of humanity, the "*gift of God*" in a pre-eminent degree. Indeed, our life, with *all* its attributes, is His gift, but this spiritual force is especially so. It is bestowed upon man only; it is something greater than intellect, imagination, genius. These it works as its instruments. It is in truth the substratum of his moral being, the former of his character, the controller of his destiny. Another remark which our text suggests is: II.—THAT THE URGENT DUTY OF MAN IS TO ROUSE THIS SPIRITUAL FORCE INTO RIGHT ACTION. "Stir up" (fan into flame) this force that is within you. This spiritual force is not always in a state of dormancy in any man. Far otherwise. But then it acts so perversely and perniciously that considered in relation to its true function it may be regarded as latent. To "*stir up*" into *right* action this spiritual force is every man's paramount self-obligation. He has to rouse up into right action the spiritual power that lies within him and which is God's greatest gift. The command implies—First: That *man has the power to do so*. Every righteous obligation implies the existence of adequate power of obedience. Where capacity ends, obligation ceases. But how can man do it? (1) How can he "*stir up*" the sentiment of worship into healthy action? By devout meditations on the moral excellencies of the one true and living God. (2) How can he "*stir up*" the sentiment of obligation? By contemplating the Divine will which is the supreme law of life. He who rightly studies that will, its absolute benevolence and rectitude, will come to feel that *right* is everything in human conduct. He will make right the guiding star of his life. (3) How can he "*stir up*" into right action the sentiment of holy love? By a devout study of the claims and needs of his fellow men. In this way every man can "*stir up*" this spiritual force, the gift of God that is within him. Observe—Secondly: On doing this *depends his true*

dignity and bliss. Man can only become great by the right use of his great powers, by bringing out into right action all the great forces of his spiritual nature. The man who has not thus risen, has only risen as the stone has risen which has been hurled up into air, it must come down to the earth again. But he who rises by developing the spiritual forces of his nature, ascends heavenward, as the eagle that guides itself up from earth to heaven through clouds and sunshine. The greatest man in heaven has never been, and can never be, greater than himself. A man once, a man for ever. Greatness consists not in any additions to our nature, but in the right development of its power. CONCLUSION.—Man attend to thyself, not selfishly, and occasionally, but generously and constantly. There is an exhaustless field lying within thee fraught with countless germs of life and power. Throughout nature there are latent forces,—fire mighty enough to burn up the universe sleeps in every atom of dust and drop of water. Powers sleep in the acorn sufficient to cover continents with majestic forests, and there is a spiritual force within us, rightly directed, that will build us into angels and lift us to the highest heavens of being. Let us, therefore, “stir up” this spiritual force, this “gift of God” within us.

LONDON.

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

Paul's Psalm of Love. (6) The Tolerance of Love.

“LOVE . . . BEARETH ALL THINGS” (OR COVERETH). *R. V.*—1 *Cor.* xiii. 7.

THERE is no doubt but that from the etymology of the word and the fact that already patience and afterwards endurance are in the context predicated of Love, the word “beareth,” should be rendered “covereth.” The full thought is that Love silently endures whatever it has to suffer. This attitude of Love is, I.—TO BE DISCERNED IN ALL IDEALS, ESPECIALLY IN THE HIGHEST. The heroism with which great wrongs, as well as little irritations, are borne by Love, rather than the faults and failings of the beloved should be noised abroad, or rather even than the beloved, so sinning against Love, should be wounded, is proverbial. Love refusing to flinch, Love refusing to retaliate, Love refusing to publish, even by its cry of pain, the wrong done to it, is not rare. Does not Jesus “cover all things” in His extenuating prayer, “Forgive them, for they know not what they do”? And is it not God, the Infinite Love, who “covers sin

and pardons iniquity"? This attitude of Love is, II.—TO BE EXPLAINED BY THE ESSENTIAL NATURE OF LOVE. It is because, as we have seen again and again underlying the virtues of Love this Psalm rehearses, Love is self-forgetful, cares not for itself but for the beloved, even though the beloved wrong it and wound it, that it throws the mantle of its concealment, as far as right will ever allow, over even the cruelties it has to bear.

EDITOR.

Paul's Psalm of Love. (7) The Faith of Love.

"LOVE BELIEVETH ALL THINGS." (*R. V.*)—1 *Cor.* xiii. 7.

ALL the features of Love in this verse are nearly related to each other, and yet have shades of difference of meaning that must not be overlooked. Thus the faith that is born of Love is something more than its power of covering up wrongs; it almost refuses to regard those wrongs at all in its full, free unsuspiciousness. For it is at the moral antipodes of the spirit that is ever surmising and suspecting that some slight was intended, some unkindness designed. Putting ever the best construction on all things, it "believeth all things." We notice, I.—THE FAITH OF LOVE OPERATES IN MANIFOLD DIRECTIONS. (1) There is a sense in which it finds exercise *towards God*. The heart that loves God is not tormented with the mysteries of His Providence. The lips of Love say, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" In the midst of inscrutable events in individual or national life, the filial child of God "believeth all things" about His wisdom and love. (2) It finds frequent exercise in relation to the *imperfections of friendship*. Often in social life there is need for the best construction to be put upon some word, or some action. Love so believes in the beloved that it eagerly puts that construction. (3) It finds exercise in relation to *mankind generally*. With the true "enthusiasm of humanity," its views of men, its interpretations of men are inspired by a faith it is very unwilling to forego. And thus, as long and as far as possible, it "believeth all things." II.—The Faith of Love is AN UNSPEAKABLE GAIN to men. For who cannot see that (1) *to have unbroken repose in God's government*, (2) *ungrudging trust in friendship*, and (3) *an unfaltering belief in humanity*, exerts the highest influences on (a) *piety* and (b) *philanthropy*.

EDITOR.

Practical Love.

"HEREBY PERCEIVE WE THE LOVE OF GOD, BECAUSE HE LAID DOWN HIS LIFE FOR US: AND WE OUGHT TO LAY DOWN OUR LIVES FOR THE BRETHREN. BUT WHOSO HATH THIS WORLD'S GOOD, AND SEETH HIS BROTHER HAVE NEED, AND SHUTTETH UP HIS BOWELS OF COMPASSION FROM HIM, HOW DWELLETH THE LOVE OF GOD IN HIM? MY LITTLE CHILDREN, LET US NOT LOVE IN WORD, NEITHER IN TONGUE; BUT IN DEED AND IN TRUTH."—1 *John* iii. 16-18.

THE apostle of Love is defining and enforcing a Love that is active and real, not a thing of semblance, or simply of sentiment, but of honest, practical fact. He sets forth, I.—THE SUPREME REVELATION of Practical Love. "Hereby we know Love." In many other ways, doubtless, but in no way so vividly, so emphatically, so completely. It is Love (1) *embodied in a Person*. (2) *Manifested in the self-sacrifice of that Person*. Thus as the apostle has just cited the extreme instance of hatred, he cites the extreme instance of Love. Christ is the complete antithesis of Cain. Cain sacrificed his brother's life for his own advantage, Christ sacrificed His own life for his enemy's good. II.—THE ESSENTIAL OBLIGATION of Practical Love. "We ought." In Christ's sacrifice is (a) the *argument*, (b) the *model* of our Love. We ought "to lay down our life." This is a frequent expression, both in his Gospel and Epistle. It speaks of the staking of life; indicates readiness to surrender life. Every deed of true Love is a divesting of self. III.—THE FLAGRANT DENIAL of Practical Love. The case he instances, similar, supposes (1) *Possession of capacity to help* the needy. "Whoso hath this world's good,"—i.e., the riches of wealth, station, intellect, or influence. (2) *Knowledge of the wants* of the needy. "Beholdeth," i.e., clearly sees. (3) *Thwarting generous impulses* towards the needy. "Shutteth up." (4) *No continuance* of Divine Love. It does not abide. IV.—THE EARNEST APPEAL to Practical Love. Not in word or tongue. This cannot mean that Love is to have no word, but that speech is not to be its only herald and spokesman. It is to be not of word and tongue only.

EDITOR.

Pulpit Handmaids.

The Duty of the Church with regard to the Overcrowded Dwellings of the Poor in Town and Country.

A Paper read at the Carlisle Church Congress, Sept.-Oct., 1884.

THE principles which I shall briefly advocate are these: that it is the duty of the Church (1) to influence opinion by collecting facts about the dwellings of the poor; (2) to urge its members vigorously to promote improvements in the material conditions of life among the poor; (3) to set an example, by the expenditure of capital, in ways not directly remunerative, on the improvement, where desirable, of dwellings on Church property.

It is not the custom of the Congress to pass resolutions; but my aim and methods are contained in the following recommendations, founded on these principles.

(a) That in the country sanitary associations be formed in each rural deanery, to call attention to this and cognate subjects, and to collect and diffuse information as to facts and causes and legal remedies.

(b) That in each large town a committee, not limited to professed members of the Church of England, be invited by the bishop to assist him in an enquiry into the conditions of life of the very poor.

A valuable precedent for this may be found in the city of Bristol.

(c) That a searching examination be made by the bishop in each diocese, or by some commission appointed by him, as to the condition and occupation of houses on the glebes and Church property in general.

Some precedent for this may be found, I believe, in the diocese of Lichfield.

(d) That the Houses of Convocation in both provinces be requested to collect, and summarise for publication, evidence on overcrowded dwellings, and their effects on the moral condition of their inhabitants.

The valuable report on Intemperance will occur to all as a precedent.

(e) That the trustees of Queen Anne's Bounty be requested to advance money, not only under the Dilapidations Act for necessary repairs, but, under proper conditions, on the report of some special commissioner appointed by the bishop, for the purpose of improving cottages upon the glebe.

There is an objection *in limine*, which it is well to meet *in limine*. It is this. "Overcrowded dwellings," it is said, "like all other unfavourable conditions of life among the very poor, are the result of the laws of economical science; and with these the Church can no more interfere than she can with the law of gravitation. A wealthy philanthropist may here and there divert his spare thousands to build fancy cottages instead of green-houses, and let them at nominal rents. But that is not business; it is his fad. It will do no harm to get information, provided you don't attempt to act upon it. It is all ultimately a question of business—of the 'cash nexus,' if you will. If it paid to provide better dwellings, they would be provided according to the law of demand and supply. If it does not pay, you must leave it alone, lest haply you be found to fight against the 'cash nexus.'"

And my reply is, that the very *raison d'être* and genius of Christianity is, by the implanting in men of a new motive and spirit, to fight such economic and social laws as act against the highest interests of society. It was not by "obeying laws of political economy" that Christianity worked its great social reforms; it was by an heroic enthusiasm for brotherhood in Christ that blindly defied and overcame the ordinary laws of economics. People talk about these laws as if they were an inexorable destiny. The laws simply tell us what will happen if we don't prevent it. There is a tendency towards degradation in a society left to itself, whose religion is, in brief, the "cash nexus" in this

world, and heaven or hell in the next. The very *raison d'être* of Christianity is to fight this tendency by implanting divine impulses in us towards a real brotherhood in this world. To give one example. The laws of demand and supply create a trade in young girls as prostitutes. We do not justify such a trade. We fight these laws. And so, as society grows more complex, we have to face old evils in new and aggravated forms; and the lack of home life in the overcrowded dwellings of our cities is one of these evils. Well, we must face it. The law of gravitation is the most universal of laws, but we defy it every day. We conquer the law of gravitation by mastering and applying the subtler forces of nature, its vital forces, its molecular forces. We can conquer, as men have conquered, the ordinary laws of economics by the finer forces of human nature, its patriotism, its enthusiasm, and most of all by the deep-set, and all but universal, instinct of religion. It is the work of the Church to apply to this purpose the mighty forces of love and humanity that can still be called out of men by the love of our Master.

The grounds, speaking broadly, for such an effort on the part of the Church as I am advocating are these:—

1.—*It is in the true spirit of Christ.* The evidences of His message to earth were His works of compassion and His divine sympathy with human needs. It was in a great measure this spirit in His Church, the love and pity that mitigated human suffering and debasement, the redemption of man from actual evils, regardless of interference with economical laws, that established Christianity in the hearts of the people. We all feel, more or less, that mediæval and modern Christianity has gone off on side issues, that it does not adequately exhibit the spirit of brotherhood, and love, and respect for humanity, that breathes in the life and words of Christ. We can do something to recover the spirit of Christ.

2.—*It is the true work of the Church.* Of course the word Church calls up very different ideas in the minds of those who hear me. It does so, because it is the name of a many-sided conception, only partly realised or realisable in fact, and no one

of us can grasp even the idea as a whole. The more precise our definition, the more inadequate must be our conception. I shall attempt no definition, and will only say that, whatever other aspects there may be of the Church, we cannot but regard it, in one of its aspects, as an organised co-operation to further the spiritual development of man in the faith and spirit of Christ. Now it is conceivable that some day, possibly soon, the Church may realise that she is not merely so many congregations, but is the people of England, and is also, in very truth, the body of Christ. To realise this apostolic idea, from which we are now so far, would be to fill us with a yet unimagined power to purify the nation from the physical and social evils which mar its spiritual development. The greater our unself-seeking aims, the stronger will be our hold on the people; it is not for our loftiness of purpose, it is for our meanness of purpose, that men sneer at the Church. And if the Church persistently expresses the highest mind and conscience of the nation, we may rely on it that the State will execute in the long run the ideas of the Church.

3.—*It is the true teaching of Revelation.* KNOWLEDGE is God's revelation. He has taught us, and we know, that moral conditions are in a very high degree dependent on physical conditions. He has taught us, and we know, that a low and immoral type of human being is produced in the dens of our cities. We have to recognise that, whatever the origin of our race, its progress is one of development, which may be divinely guided into an improvement, or by the withdrawal of higher influences may become a fatal degeneration. We have, therefore, if we would work together with God, to watch all that affects the physical and moral growth of our people. Probably more may be done now in many places for the gradual advance of Christian life among the classes now scarcely reached by our teaching, by affecting their material, moral, intellectual, and social conditions of life, than by direct but exclusive preaching of the Gospel message. The lesson of the parable of the Sower is not that it is our duty to sow seed indiscriminately in all soils, but that failure is certain, unless we previously prepare the soil. The Church must plough as well as sow. Nay, she must

wait till the slow processes of nature make the soil. But she can hasten those processes.

4.—*The cure for the estrangement, both of the intellectual and of the artisan classes, from our present unworthy Christianity, will be found in some such principle as this.* The speculative philosophies of our day, the ceaseless roar of competition in the world, and the smallness of the enthusiasms of the Church, have combined to make men less hopeful, harder, and more critical of our pretensions. There is a wide-spread pessimism. Surely the cure for it is the vigorous belief, incessantly expressed in hopeful action, in the fundamental truth that man is verily a son of God and a member of Christ. Some of us hold this as a pious or academic opinion; some of us don't hold it at all. But we may come to see that this fundamental truth involves a passionate desire that the conditions of life for every man, woman, and child in England, shall be worthy of that sonship and that membership. The Church has never been seized by this splendid optimism. She has had her enthusiasms for power, for independence, for uniformity, for doctrine, for continuity, for system; and she has been always more or less true to her mission to individuals; but never yet has she realised her work in the nation, to make our brotherhood, not a dream, but a reality. When she does realise this the interest of all else will fade; the small will be driven out by the great; evil by the good; speculative difficulties will fall into their natural place, and will lose their power to alienate the intellectual classes; and there will wake in the heart of the people a response to the message of love that we shall never evoke in any other way. When the reformation comes, we shall perhaps see that men of the Oberlin and women of the Octavia Hill type, were "Reformers before the Reformation." And it is open to us in our various measures to be the same.

5.—*Co-operation with the Nonconformist Churches* may be based on such high practical aims and work. Here is a field which we may enter as allies, all equally single-hearted; here we may learn mutual respect, heal up old wounds and scars, and find our true unity, and multiply our united strength tenfold. And I need

not say that the Church of England ought to take the lead in all that is generous.

And now to conclude.

In making efforts to improve the physical conditions of life of our people, we must not one whit relax our efforts in other directions. We must of course try to enlist the hearty co-operation of the people themselves in all endeavours to improve home life ; but we must also try to get a better education for the nation in all its classes ; we must try above all things to provide a larger-hearted, wiser, better ministry ; and to establish a deeper personal faith in God, and holiness of life, and broader charity, and truer theology among the professing members of the Church. Redemption from spiritual and physical evils must go hand in hand ; a nobler and purer life to correspond with nobler and purer conditions. Better conditions of life alone will not suffice ; the limit of their effect is soon reached. But at present, and for many a year to come, physical, social, political evils demand attention from the Church. For religion is based on the home, and myriads of our brothers and sisters have no home ; their sleeping places do not deserve the pure and sacred name of home ; and the loss of home means physical, and moral, and spiritual atrophy, and social and political decay.

Such are the principles and the method of dealing with this and cognate subjects, and such are the reasons for those principles, which I would most humbly and earnestly press on all members of the Church, and I trust that, with God's blessing, some practical result may speedily follow from your deliberations and your actions.

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MINISTERIAL SUCCESS.

“To cheer the pastors, let every one *be careful as to what he thinks and says on the subject of pastoral success.* This is a fast age, when men are inclined to think that the lightning is too slow, and the thunder not loud enough. It is a commercial age, when ‘perpetual commerce is creating a stockbroking habit, the habit of asking each man, thing, and institution, “Well, what have you done since I saw you last.”’* It is at the same time an age of excitement, when people crave for the stimulus of a spasmodic, sensational religion, and are ready to imagine that in religious affairs at any rate the engine is doing most work when the steam is most blowing off. The best pastors are great sufferers from these tendencies of the age. Some members of our churches discourage the man who edifies, by leaving him for the man who only shouts the Gospel A B C, and in doing so they actually think that they show all the rarer spirituality and the higher life. They discourage the pastor by holding up to him as the true standard some preacher who preaches to the nerves, and who, therefore, to use a theatrical phrase, ‘fills the house.’ They discourage the pastor by expecting him to show, in proof of his success, the kind of immediate effects that are very likely to follow the work of an evangelist—such as many clear and definite cases of conversion under his ministry. Conversion is all they understand by success. The good man longs for it more than they do. He is ready to say to his people in Rutherford’s language, ‘My witness is in heaven that your heaven would be two heavens to me, and the salvation of you all as two salvations to me.’ He is right to feel this, yet it must be remembered that conversion is not the stopping point but the starting point of the Christian life, that the pastor was specially to deal with that life *after* that starting point, and that success in this kind of dealing never can be tabulated. The common idea of success is, that it is something countable, and something that vitally includes sensation. But all success is not the same success; we may apply to its glory the principle expressed in the words, ‘One glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars, and one star differeth from another star in glory.’ Let us be sure that we mean what God means by success. Somewhere, I cannot now tell where, I have heard of a case like this: a deacon was speaking to a visitor about his

* Walter Bagehot on the English Constitution, p. 295.

pastor's want of success. No doubt he had often reminded his pastor of the same, with much condolence. 'Well,' said the visitor, 'what is the proof?' 'Proof? why, last year only one person joined the church!' 'Sir, who was that one?' 'I don't know.' 'You must know,—what was his name?' He looks into the church book, and finds that the name of the man who was the only one added is 'Robert Moffatt.' Then said the other, 'Sir, when you added that man to your church, you added generation upon generations, and yet you have been making your pastor's life bitter by the dismal toll of that statistical complaint—"Only one!"' Do you know what they once rang the bells of heaven for? It was over the conversion of *one* sinner, *only one*, and it was there reckoned to be such a great success that it made joy in the presence of the angels.

"Our greatest success does not come to light within the range of our earthly lifetime. Only the Infinite One can tell the infinite story of consequences. The three thousand converts at Pentecost were three thousand centres of converting power. Starting afresh from those centres the influence has been striking out and going on through checks, intersections, and interruptions ever since; it is going on to-day, is going on here, will be going on until it shall reach the widest extent of local diffusion and the last syllable of time; yet all this began in the conversion of one—Andrew.

"It is bad policy to discourage a pastor who is honestly trying to do a pastor's work, by dinning him even with the most sympathetic and affectionate croaks about his want of success, at the same time measuring that success by a merely numerical standard. The best pastor is too ready to be discouraged by real or imaginary failure. It is an old story. The words of Father Anselm come to me over eight centuries, but they sound as if they came out from some broken heart that quivers here to-day. 'If it be not in the counsels of Thy eternal will that Thou shouldst by me feed and bless Thy sheep, what do I here? Why do I stay amongst these tumults, if I am not through Thy grace to promote the salvation of my brother? Grant me, then, I beseech Thee, by all Thy pity, Thy heavenly consolation; for this heavy weight which Thou hast laid upon me, I know not how to bear, and I dare not lay aside. O God, the helper of all that trust in Thee, let not Thy grace forsake, let not Thy mercy leave me!'

"In order to victory, what do we most want? More buildings? more labourers sent into the harvest? more machinery? more men? 'More

men?' says an American poet, '*More man.*' Yes, that is the phrase; we want more *man*, through having more God in man, and more Christ in our Christianity, that while we publish the Gospel, the life of the Holy Ghost in us may show that our tale is worth telling, that our holiness is worth having, that our happiness is worth feeling, and that our secret is worth knowing. Not for this alone do we need the Holy Ghost, but also for the purpose of making our message divinely effectual. That almightiness is needed in the hearer as well as in the speaker. We aim at nothing less than raising the dead! The Book calls unrenewed men and women *stones*. Of course we understand this in no mere materialistic or fatalistic sense, implying absence of responsibility, but as meaning that they are stones to God, having no more trust, no more love, no more responsiveness than stones have. Take a stone into the open air, and let the sun shine on it, it is still a stone; dip it in sparkling waters, it is still a stone; carry it into the garden, and let trembling bells of beauty waver round it, it is still a stone; speak to it, it never hears; strike it, it never feels; smash it into a thousand splinters, and each splinter is a stone. So man, without fellowship with God, is a stone to God; but bring to this stone the Gospel leverage, and lift it on to the Living Stone; and at the moment of touching, life from the Crucified One shoots through it, and the dead stone palpitates and is made alive. God by the Holy Spirit works the miracle of changing the heart of stone into a heart of flesh. Brothers, 'be ye filled with the Spirit'; then live the Gospel and declare the Gospel, and through your Gospel words life will go out of your heart into the hearts you seek to save. All will be glad: new springs will be put into the ministers, and 'much people will be added to the Lord!'"

From "Homilies on Christian Work,"

By CHARLES STANFORD, D.D.



Gleanings of the Vintage.—Autumn, 1884.

“As the gleanings of grapes when the vintage is done.”—*Isaiah xxiv. 13.*

CHILDHOOD, A DEVELOPMENT.—“Each *child was a new problem* to be solved, each child was a new thing under the sun, the only new thing there was; for each child came into the world dowered with its own force of faculties and affections. All the solemn endowments, the health of life which the Creator breathed into the soul of man, lay within the child's heart as petals lay within the sheath of the flower.”—*Dr. Adler.*

MIRACLES OF GRACE.—“The power of the Word of God is greater than before; but it is heard in the secret shrines of many hearts. *Miracles* are there still; yes. ‘Greater works than these, because I go to My Father.’ But they are within the hearts that He takes to His keeping to transform them and renew. The works are as real, but they are more occult. Their effects are greater and spread wider than the original wonders.”—*Dr. Thompson.*

BIBLICAL DIFFICULTIES.—“And if *chronological difficulties* still remained and genealogies were compressed—and these, let us remember, were all prior to the time of Abraham; when Moses was supernaturally inspired dimly to sketch the great events and epochs of a far-reaching past, these great epochs towered one behind the other; as the traveller on the plains of India saw hundreds of miles away the peaks of the great Himalayan range in close array, rising one behind the other, and his eye marked each in succession, without taking note of the vast plains and wide uplands that intervened, hidden and buried between each.”—*Canon Tristram.*

THE GENIUS OF CHRISTIANITY.—“The very *raison d'être* and *genius of Christianity* was the implanting in men of a new motive and spirit to fight such economic and social laws as act against the interests of society. There was a tendency towards degradation in a society left to itself, whose religion was, in brief, the ‘cash nexus’ in this world, and heaven or hell in the next. The very *raison d'être* of Christianity was to fight that tendency by implanting divine impulses in us towards a real brotherhood in this world.”—*Rev. James Wilson.*

GIVING FAITH TO OTHERS.—“Keep faith by all means, but *giving faith to others* is the higher and more Christian calling. Standing fast does not exhaust Christian duty. Raising those who are fallen is included in it. And a duty is neglected when our lips are sealed, and we are dumb with weakness in the presence of the doubter. Get and give the message of salvation to him. It is the learner that is alone the teacher.”—*Rev. R. Glover.*

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Reviews.

TERSE TALK ON TIMELY TOPICS. By HENRY VARLEY. London: J. Nisbet and Co.

The "Terse Talk" here might be considered by some to be not of the most elevated and refined character. It is not on literature, history, poetry, science, but on what the author considers to be the Gospel. They who say that the theology of the book is that of the shambles of the Elephant and Castle, express more the contempt of their own hearts than enlightened reflection of their minds. There are many good things in the book. For example, the following is worth quotation: "Work for the Organization Society. This institution is said to be capable of finding out and exposing fraudulent and criminal associations, missions, &c. I wonder whether its attention has been directed to the wealthy people whose riches are obtained from the misery, squalor, and intemperance of their fellow-men. A short time since I passed by a large public-house belonging to one of those highly respectable firms, some of whose partners are known to be prominent Christian men. In front of the bar stood fourteen wretched women in every stage of drunkenness, uttering cries and imprecations which made them shameful and appalling. No policemen interfered. This degrading spectacle is but one of hundreds which are known to exist in this vast city. Not only is this iniquity tolerated, but the Legislature, in its abnormal character as the patron and regulator of vice and crime, actually licenses, shields, and makes lawful these pandemoniums of drunkenness. Well might Cowper, in days past, pen his tremendous satire. Have we neither poesy nor prose of stern denunciation for this social wickedness? When will the time come that this legalised iniquity shall be accounted a crime? These are Cowper's startling words:—

'Pass where you may, through city or through town,
Village or hamlet of this merry land;
Though lean and beggared, every twentieth pace
Conducts the nose to such a whiff of state debauch, forth issuing from its styes,
Which law has licensed, as makes temperance reel.'

The poet sums up the legislative logic of helping the revenue, by practically legalizing the drunkenness of the people, in these words:—

'Gloriously drunk, obey the important call;
Her cause demands the assistance of your throats;
You all can swallow, and she asks no more.'

The author seems to invoke the aid of "The Charity Organization Society." What an incongruous name! True charity can no more be organized than the light of heaven or the flowing breeze. Rather call it a "charity checking, freezing society"!

DOCTRINE AND DUTY. By REV. GEORGE CUSHMAN, D.D. New York: T. Whittaker.

Here are twenty-five pulpit discourses on a great variety of subjects. Though the author is a man of reading, reflection, and ability, he is not marked by catholicity. He seems to study the Gospel within the narrow precincts and under the dim light of what he calls the Church of England, and not on the sunny and lofty hills of an œcumenic and untrammelled Christianity. Then, for example, he declares the rite of confirmation to be amongst the first principles of the doctrines of Christ, and urges the "laying on of hands," in Hebrews iv. 2, as meaning the "laying on" of hands of the bishops. He is constantly referring to "our church" as some grand "*she*" that is the depositary and arbiter of all truth. Why an assemblage of men and women should be represented as a "*she*" surpasses our comprehension. Notwithstanding, however, the author's rigorous ecclesiasticism, and sad lack of catholicity, his discourses are worth reading. They abound with historical information and teem with thoughts of a lofty type, given forth, not unfrequently, in flashes of rare eloquence.

THE PROBLEM OF CHURCHES AND POOR IN OUR LARGE TOWNS. By K. MILNE, M.A. London: Blackwood and Sons.

This book consists of several chapters: General view of the numbers and conditions of the lapsed populations in large towns—An inquiry into the principal causes of the present condition of the lapsed populations—Remedial measures, secular, by the state, by associations and private individuals, and by the poor themselves, by the Church of Scotland, by subordinate agencies, denominational and undenominational—Co-operation of all the Evangelical Churches, and recognition of each other's work, necessary for the complete solution of the problem—Wherein the Church of Scotland needs a new departure in her efforts towards the recovery of the lapsed, (1) in the introduction of new or the expansion of present agencies, (2) in the vast multiplication of individual missionary effort on the part of the members of the Church—The Church's mission to the cultivated and sceptical classes outside the Churches—Summary and appeal. This book has a purpose, and that purpose is the Christianisation of the masses, the ignorant, degraded, and all but starving millions. This work is pre-eminently the work of the Church, and if what is called the Church had been always an assemblage of Christly men—Christly not only in theology but in ethics and in spirit, the work would have been done long ago. The first thing to be done is the reformation of the Church, the replacing of a conventional Christianity by the Christianity of the Sermon on the Mount. A Church in the true sense should control all

human affairs. It should inspire, animate, and control the State, the market, and all secular concerns. Ministers of the Gospel are beginning to find fault with the State. They ask, why does the State not interfere and prevent drunkenness, which is one of the great sources of human degradation and misery? And some of the most thoughtful of them ask why it does not interfere and put down that heartless and grasping landlordism that has robbed the people of England of their lands, so that they are not only left without sufficient earth to cultivate, in order to get supplies for their physical wants, but without sufficient space even to afford them a decent habitation, so that they are bound to crowd together in miserable hovels? A question this that is coming up, and that every Church, if it would effect an improvement in the social and moral condition of the people, must urge upon the legislature. The ministers who harangue and write about the "cries of" outcast London, and only urge the multiplication of more places of worship, thinking men will rank amongst the canting hypocrites of the age. Into a Church that is not in itself thoroughly Christly we would not have the Christless enter. Let the Church of England, and all the Nonconformist Churches, rise as one man to demand the Government to put down not only the drunkenness, but the injustice and cupidity of those who monopolise that earth which God gave to the children of men. We heartily recommend this book. How deeply Archdeacon Paley, the illustrious moral and political philosopher, felt the monstrous iniquity of this landlordism. He says, "If you should see a flock of pigeons in a field of corn, and if (instead of each one picking where and what it liked, taking just as much as it wanted and no more) you should see ninety-nine of them gathering all they got in a heap, reserving nothing for themselves but the chaff and the refuse; keeping this heap for one, and that for the weakest, perhaps worst, pigeon of the flock, sitting round and looking on all the winter, whilst this one was devouring, throwing about, and wasting it; and if a pigeon more hardy and hungry than the rest touched a grain of the hoard, all the others instantly flying upon it and tearing it to pieces; if you should see this, you would see nothing more than what is every day practised and established among men. Among men you see the ninety and nine toiling and scraping together a heap of superfluities for one (and this one, too, oftentimes, the feeblest and worst of the whole set, a child, a woman, a madman, or a fool), getting nothing for themselves all the while but a little of the coarsest of the provision which their own industry produces, looking quietly on while they see the fruits of all the labour spent or spoiled, and if one of the number take or touch a particle of the hoard, the others joining against him and hanging him for the theft." We heartily recommend this book.

REVELATION RECONSIDERED. By W. EWING, M.A. London: Geo. Bell & Co.

The following extract from the introduction of this book will put the reader into possession of the author's great canon by which he interprets the great Apocalypse. "It may seem a great presumption for any one to hope to catch the attention of the thoughtful reader by a book on the Revelation of St. John. Many have had but a small measure of success in the same attempt, so that many readers are unwilling to embark on that subject. What can justify another attempt? Will one find credit if he should say that he has found a key which unlocks every part, and shows a consistent plan in the Book from first to last? There are but two alternatives; he must either keep it to himself or he must declare it at once, and tax the reader's patience as little as possible. This latter method shall be tried. The key is this:—The Jewish Church of old and the Christian Church are, in their outward fortunes and in their whole careers, wonderfully parallel. In the Old Testament we have the history of the former. In the Apocalypse we have a prophetic and enigmatic history of the latter." Now as we do not believe that there was such a thing as a Jewish Church, for the Old Testament reveals rather a Jewish pandemonium than a Church, we scarcely think that the author's scheme will unlock this book, albeit there is a great deal in this production that is at once enlightening and suggestive, and will well repay a thoughtful and devout perusal.

THE LIGHT OF LIFE. By REV. F. J. SCOTT, M.A. London: Hatchards & Co.

This volume contains twenty-seven Sermons. Amongst the subjects we have (1) A Reply to the Cry, Watchman, What of the Night? (2) What is Truth? (3) Nicodemus, the Timid Disciple. (4) The One Thing Wanting. (5) Faithfulness Over Few Talents. (6) The Sights in the House. (7) The Presence of Our Lord at United Worship. (8) Christ the Food of the Soul. (9) Saul the King, and Saul of Tarsus. (10) Christian Confidence and Christian Duty. (11) Neglected Opportunities. (12) The Requirements of God. (13) The Canaanite Mother. (14) Repentance. (15) The Absent Lord Watching Over His Church. (16) Prayer for the Holy Ghost. (17) Memory. (18) Stewardship. (19) The Saviour's Rejoicing and its Cause. (20) The Work of the Church and of Each Member of it. (21) The Dwelling-place of the Lord. (22) The Position of a True Christian. (23) Praying Always with All-Prayer and Supplication. (24) Publican's Feast. (25) The Lord showing to Man His Thought. (26) Death of the Righteous. (27) The Light of the Blessed. All the discourses are conventionally Evangelical. They breathe a piety strong and earnest, and a fervid aspiration for the salvation of souls, and some of them throw light upon dark passages.



The
Leading Homily.

THE GREATNESS OF THE PRESENT.

“THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS COME UPON YOU.”—*Matt. xii. 28. (R.V.)*

WHATEVER may have been the first and direct meaning of these words, they clearly imply that the great realities of God's moral government are now present. The tokens of His control are not merely matters of history or of prophecy. The actual existence in the living present of such great realities is not only the implication of this sentence that rang like solemn music from the Divine lips of Jesus, but finds distinct and emphatic declaration in many other words of His, and of His holy apostles. For instance—

“NOW IS THE JUDGMENT OF THIS WORLD.”—*John xii. 31.*

“HE THAT BELIEVETH NOT ON HIM HATH BEEN JUDGED ALREADY.”—*John iii. 18.*

“THE HOUR COMETH, AND NOW IS, WHEN THE DEAD SHALL HEAR THE VOICE OF THE SON OF GOD; AND THEY THAT HEAR SHALL LIVE.”—*John v. 25.*

“HE THAT BELIEVETH ON THE SON HATH ETERNAL LIFE.”—*John iii. 36.*

“LO, I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS.”—*Matthew xxviii. 20.*

Not ignoring for even the passing hour that in the future there will be a clearer and fuller apocalypse of The Christ, of resurrection, of judgment, of retribution than we may have now, it is of vital importance that we should not be blind to such manifestations of The Christ, of resurrection, of judgment, and of retribution as belong to the present. For as to the manifestation of The Christ, it is one of the elemental doctrines of Scripture that there is no impenetrable barrier between the seen and the unseen; and as to the development of character, and so of destiny, Scripture and reason alike teach there is no abrupt breaking off between the present and the future. The future is the harvest, the outcome of the present. In the present we are sowing the seeds of that future, building up the edifice of the future; we ourselves are "growing up" into that future.

We cannot, therefore, even as heirs of the future, too eagerly enquire what are the greatest realities of the present; what may be involved in the incisive statement, "Now is the kingdom of God come upon you," and in such other Scriptures as we have just read.

Very pithily has a well-known preacher (Mark Guy Pearse) recently put some aspects of this truth: "Now what is heaven? Is it wearing white robes? No. Is it walking golden streets? No? It is the eternal harmony of God's will and man's will flowing on together. 'Why I can have that down here, you say.' So you can. What is hell? I don't know. It is the greatest of all mysteries; but of all mysteries the most fearful. I can only think of it as man's will rising against God's. 'Why I can have it up here, you say.' So you can." Such words hint the lines I want to pursue in this meditation. For let no contemplation of long periods of time induce us to think lightly of this brief life of ours. There are long periods that challenge devout contemplation, great spaces that the history of the Old Testament, and still greater spaces that many yet unfulfilled prophecies of both Old and New Testaments cover, unimaginable æons, ages upon ages. But

"We should count time by heart-throbs, not by figures on a dial."

The present is crowded with tremendous realities, the present is charged with awful possibilities. Just as oculists have to treat two dissimilar infirmities of the eye, so we have to deal with two opposite imperfections of mental vision. There are some whose near sight is clear, but whose far sight is hazy and obscure; some whose far sight is good, but whose near sight is very imperfect. Both are great defects. The one that illustrates the evil we are now combating is the sight that descries clearly the distant mountain and star and tree, but cannot read the type of a book in his hand, or recognise the features of a friend by his side. Such infirmity in mental or moral vision leads to a sickly and sentimental dreaming about the future, and a guilty indifferentism to the present.

What are the great realities of the present? Are they the accumulations of wealth, the gigantic institutions, the material occupations of men, or even their pleasures, their vices, or their calamities that bulk out in such colossal proportions before our eyes? No! Behind, and beneath all these, influencing them, and influenced by them, but far more actual, more enduring, more intimate to humanity, are the great realities of character, and of God's relationship to character. "The things which are unseen are eternal." Yet these things are not wholly unseen. They give evidences of their existence and presence, so that they become not only matters of faith, but of experience to men. Let us in such a vein of thought consider—

I.—The present JUDGMENT.

That there is "a judgment to come" we may not forget. The almost universal forebodings of human hearts, of the wronged and of the wrong doers also, the unnatural contrasts that are common between men's character and their circumstances, and the unexhausted prophecies of Holy Scripture, all predict "a day of judgment."

But there is a present judgment. Scripture declares it. Men have been "judged already." "Some men's sins are evident, going before unto judgment." There are many instances in human experience. Already and always we are before "the great white

throne" of God's holiness, for that throne stands everywhere and for ever; already and always "the books" are being "opened," for there are the recollections of memory, the protests of conscience, the clearly uttered verdicts of God concerning much broken law, not only physical law, but moral also. Such verdicts, such opening of the Divine book of judgment, is to be found in the fruit of disobedience or of obedience to Divine laws, in the truer tones of society, in the remorse of the sinful, in the inward blessedness of the good, for one whisper of an approving conscience is sweeter music than thunders of applause.

II.—The present RETRIBUTION.

There is now and here in a solemn sense a hell and a heaven for man.

There is a *present hell*. Out of it will flame his future hell unless he be delivered in time. "Sold under sin," that is the *chain of bondage* of a present hell; "under a curse," that is the *central secret* of a present hell; "condemned already," that is the *explanation* of a present hell. "The mind is its own place; and of itself can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven." Already is the worm of remorse gnawing in some bosoms, already are the fires of judgment consuming much that is in the brain, and heart, and body, too, of many men. Cain and Judas are but two of multitudes who warn us of a present hell.

There is a *present heaven*. The realm of light and song is not altogether future; heaven is not all yonder and above. It is now, here, within. And not only within. For if there be no heaven lying around us as in our infancy, it is because there is earthliness within. Even now the childlike see heaven, enter into heaven. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." "He that believeth hath eternal life." The tree may grow, the boughs spread, the foliage become richer, the fruit ripen. But it is the same tree. Eternal life is not mere endless existence. That might become an intolerable calamity, "a second death." But eternal life is perfection of life, not merely in limitless duration, which is an essential element to beings who can forecast a future, but in knowledge, in virtue, in

love. "This is life eternal, to know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." And such life, such heaven, may be a present possession of human souls. The prayer, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," is not taught us by some cruel Tantalus, but by the ever loving Son of Man. This leads us to notice—

III.—The present RESURRECTION.

Whatever the future may have in store as to fulness of risen life, it is gloriously certain that the chief resurrection, that which gives worth to all other possible resurrection, is possible now and here. He who is "The Life" said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live." In this He is speaking of such as, having heard His word and believed on Him, have "passed out of death into life." To illustrate the present renewal of man's moral nature by suggesting analogies between that spiritual quickening and the stupendous events of a coming general resurrection, would be to drift into a vast region of manifold difficulties. But we may fairly take some such recorded physical resurrection as that of Lazarus, and find in it not only a narrative but a parable, a parable whose every detail has some profound suggestion about spiritual resurrection. "They that hear shall live." The soul that hears Christ as the Revealer of God, the Forgiver of sin, the Inspirer of duty, the Interpreter of destiny, thrills with new vitality. All others simply exist, such a soul lives. And the beginning of that life is the present resurrection.

IV.—The present CHRIST.

Both Paul and John cherished the hope of a clearer vision of Christ than they realised on earth; our Lord Himself warrants them and us in expecting it. But in His words—words that in harmony with the paradoxes of His history were words of farewell—"I am with you alway," He unmistakeably promised to men an everywhere present Christ. There are logical processes, and still more frequently moral moods, which lead man to the creed of a Divine absenteeism which, indeed, is against all reason,

all Scripture, and the best human experience. The consciousness of communion with Christ as comforting, teaching, bracing our souls, compels a belief in "the real presence." While a daily and obedient turning to Him with the loyal enquiry, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" is an assurance of "the personal reign" of Christ which no controversy can gainsay.

CONCLUSION.—Whatever the years, such as the one now ebbing from us or the one now flowing towards us may take from us, or bring to us, let us rejoice that they cannot make The Christ other than He ever is. Right relationship with Him will bring us into a right relationship to all the greatest realities of our life, our character, and our destiny. Let us set store not only on the records of what He was, but on visions of what He is. Let the gospels be not so much a handbook of the history of a life once lived, as an index of a life ever being lived, and lived near us as an undying Light for our guidance, and an exhaustless Fountain for our strengthening.

EDITOR.



FAITH AND WORKS.—"God does not give us each a private stock of wisdom and strength, by which we may work out an independent righteousness, or which we may stand and negotiate with Him and our fellow-creatures, but He creates us with a capacity of receiving or rejecting, and thus maintaining our moral responsibility, and then He wells out of His own infinite fulness the supply of all our needs, thus imparting to all His gifts the character of loving fellowship, like that father in the parable who said, 'Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine,'—were I to give you an independent provision, it would break this loving bond. One feels, too, that it is righteous that the fountain should be acknowledged as the fountain; and thus we see that there is nothing arbitrary in the declaration that faith is man's righteousness. Faith means dependence, reciprocity, and that surely is the only right place for man to occupy, and thus only can he rise out of the religion of obedience into the religion of communion."—THOMAS ERSKINE.

Germ of Thought.

The Secret of the Successful Life.

"FOR I AM ALREADY BEING OFFERED, AND THE TIME OF MY DEPARTURE IS COME. I HAVE FOUGHT THE GOOD FIGHT, I HAVE FINISHED THE COURSE, I HAVE KEPT THE FAITH: HENCEFORTH THERE IS LAID UP FOR ME THE CROWN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH THE LORD, THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGE, SHALL GIVE TO ME AT THAT DAY."—2 *Timothy* iv. 6-8. (R.V.)

THE writer of these words is one of the most heroic characters of the New Testament history. He may have been surpassed by others in patience, meekness, humility, and the gentler graces of the new life, but he was surpassed by none in the purity and intensity of his purpose, and in the noble and fearless fidelity with which he pursued it.

It is hardly possible to read his letter to his friend, bearing in mind the rough experiences he had undergone, without being attracted by its sublime and lofty trust. Rarely does a man who has sought to be a benefactor to his race, and who has received as his reward the opposition and hatred of those whom he desired to bless, speak with such brave and unfaltering confidence. The memory of the perils he has encountered puts a pathetic caution into his speech, and the requital of violence he has received obscures his faith either in his method or his cause. But it was not so with Paul. Persecution did not dim the clear insight of his faith, and the dreary experience of a Roman dungeon chilled not the enthusiasm and passion of his heart. His faith in God, in Christ, and in the cause for which he had wrought and suffered, never shone so gloriously as in those last days when the shadow of death hovered round him, and he sent this letter to Timothy, and, through him, to all the world. There was no despondency

in his tones, no fear expressed of the approaching trial, no shrinking from the thought of death. He was the conqueror, not the conquered; the victor, not the vanquished. And the faith by which he had lived and which receives here so thrilling and inspiring an expression, shows that he at least had grasped the secret of a true prosperity. His life was a triumph, a success, even though, according to the tradition, it was ended by the executioner's axe. So the question it suggests to us is one of exceeding interest and pertinence. "WHAT DO WE MEAN BY A SUCCESSFUL LIFE?" OR "IN WHAT DOES ITS SECRET CONSIST?"

It is a question whose importance is attested even by the simple and familiar greetings of every day. "What are you doing?" "How are you getting on?" and all the common forms of salutation, witness to the reality of the interest the question of our prosperity involves. Yet there are few questions more frequently and disastrously misunderstood. It is taken for granted that a man is "getting on" happily and prosperously if his trade is increasing and his profits grow large. The popular standard of success is not a very high one. It regards life only in its visible, external, and glittering aspects. The man who makes money, or who makes himself a name, or whom the multitude applauds—he is the successful man! That is the kind of prosperity that, only too frequently, men pray may be the fortune of their children when they send them into the world to struggle with its temptations and do battle with their subtlest foes. It is by that standard that failure and success are gauged. If their children pass through the world acquiring wealth, attaining position, and winning the good opinion of all sorts of men, then God is thanked for His abounding goodness; but if wealth never becomes a guest in their children's household, if the popular voice is never uplifted on their behalf, if the only privilege of position they realise is the privilege to struggle, then—no matter how sterling be the manhood which such an experience has ennobled and developed—there is a great lamentation over a career that has miserably and ignominiously failed. So it is well that we should understand, if possible, where lies the secret of a successful life—a life that reaches success even

though the way out of it be crowded as Paul's was, as Christ's was also, with all the signs of failure, sorrow, and defeat.

ITS SECRET IS NOT TO BE FOUND, WHERE FREQUENTLY IT IS SOUGHT, IN THE ABUNDANCE OF MATERIAL POSSESSIONS. If life had no higher interests than those which vanish at our death, if there were no invisible links binding us to the world of which this world is but the parable and figure, the secret of prosperity might be found in the abundance our hands had gathered; but so long as there are interests and realities that transcend the sphere of sense, to seek the clue to prosperity among the vanishing attractions of the world is to follow the policy of the ignorant and blind. Yet to seek it in that direction is a temptation which appeals to us with vehement urgency, and which only "the remnant" has power and wisdom to resist. Especially does it come with mighty persuasiveness to those who are just entering into the strife and competition of the world. Possibly they would acknowledge that the true success—that of a brave, noble, fearless heart, and a character which Christ has been allowed to mould to the perfect form—can never be gained out of material treasures alone; yet the vision that passes and repasses before them is too seductive and beautiful not to attempt to convert into a reality. So they "go in for an independence"—to use a phrase that has no equal in our language for the grimness of its satire—and attaining that they will be successful men! They confound things that differ. The "independence" that is based on riches may be a tribute to the skill and industry they have exercised in the business in which they have engaged, but it is no symbol of character, of manhood, of success in the permanent elements of life. True it may make a name for a man; he may be known to the generation in which he lives, and to half of the generation that shall follow, as the "successful merchant," but the signs of the successful merchant are not the signs of the successful man. The wealth he has obtained may be the means of developing either the best or the worst that is in him. It may help him to transform his benevolence into beneficence, and to bless the world with great and generous deeds, or it may help to make him mean and miserly and his name a bye-word and

reproach. Of both these possibilities there are plenty of living illustrations. The men who have grown rich divide themselves into two classes. There are those who have gained manhood as well as money, who have "a tear for pity and a hand open as day for melting charity," and whose names will be had in everlasting remembrance; and there are those who have made wealth but nought besides, through whose flinty hearts no throbs of mercy beat, and who, when they have wealth enough to buy up a kingdom, are less sensitive to the appeals of want and the cries of misery than they were when they wielded a hammer or guided a loom.

NOR IS THE SECRET TO BE FOUND IN HAPPINESS—IN A LIFE FREE FROM ANXIETIES, AND CARES, AND THE DISCIPLINE OF THE NOBLEST SOULS. It is a very natural prayer to us that we may be saved from trouble, sorrow, difficulty, and misfortune. We pray, without the prompting of a Litany, "from lightning and tempest, from plague, pestilence, and famine, from battle and murder and sudden death, good Lord deliver us." We need no pressure, save that of an aching heart, to force from us the prayer that God will be merciful to us in our trial. And because sorrow brings pain, we look upon deliverance from it as an unqualified benediction, and regard the life that is happy and untroubled as that which is to be envied and admired. We forget that the life that is bright with tears may be truer and nobler than the life which is bright with smiles, and that the tears of sorrow may be the tears of joy through which we catch glimpses of the everlasting truths and see the lights of the city of God. We forget, also, that just as there is work for the rain and storm in nature, so there is work for them in human life. When the sun has poured its fierce heat upon the earth, week after week and month after month, how eloquent is that dumb cry for rain which is sent up to the quivering heavens from the waterless meadows, the shrivelled trees, and the baked and gaping ground! It is a parable of a heart that has lived, or tried to live, on the surface alone, amidst laughter and merriment, and that turns away at last to make its sad confession that in the excitements of sense there is no true and lasting joy, no deep and satisfying good.

Freedom from care and sorrow is not, in the truest sense, the sign of the happiest, as assuredly it is not of the noblest life. We need the gentle rain of little troubles and perplexities to keep fresh and sweet the virtues we possess, and now and then, perchance, the shock of a greater sorrow to make us tenderer towards others and severer towards ourselves, to strike deeper the roots of our character and life, to make us more trustful of God and more loving towards men.

NOR IS THE SECRET TO BE FOUND IN THAT GIFT, MUCH COVETED,—LENGTH OF DAYS. It is not by the years through which we live that either the volume or quality of life is measured. There are men who go through the world neither learning nor forgetting; they have age without experience, the form of manhood without its reality. Test such a man by the periods of the almanac and how fortunate he will be! He will live long; no care will trouble him and no anxiety will give him pain; events will pass lightly over him; his life will linger towards its century, and the shadows will fall upon him at the last softly as the shadows of a summer's eve. Yet can such a slow, slumbering, inactive life be described as prosperous? "One hour of glorious strife is worth a whole century of such inglorious ease." It is not in length of days that the secret of successful living can be found. A man may be stricken down suddenly, in the prime and vigour of his manhood, before his sun has reached its noon, and yet his life may be rounded off with beautiful completeness. So I would think of Alfred Vaughan and Frederick Robertson, called to the service of the higher kingdom ere yet they had reached the meridian of their days. The years have no place in the reckonings of God. We measure life by the ticking of the clock; God by the beating of the heart of love, by the hands outstretched in pity, by the feet quick on errands of benevolence, by benign activity and trust and prayer.

So, then, the secret of the successful life is not to be found in the possession of what are commonly regarded as the greatest benedictions of our life. Length of years does not necessarily imply experience; happiness may mean only a frivolous, selfish, useless, and wasted heart; and great riches may be in the keeping

of a man who is bankrupt in character and soul. Where then shall it be found?

The answer is suggested by these words of Paul,—“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give to me at that day.” He must have had possession of it who could look on the swiftly coming day of death, not with fear, or stoical heroism, but with the calm and glad consciousness of certain triumph. What then was it? THE “FAITH” HE KEPT,—THE FAITH THAT LINKS A MAN, FIRST, TO GOD, AND THEN TO ALL THERE IS OF GREAT AND ABIDING GOOD.

It is through the faith that unites us to the Lord that the meaning of life is understood, its possibilities known, and its destiny realized. A man without faith, to whom God is as silent as the hills, and the “unseen things” only a mocking vision of the mind, wanders and drifts about the sea of life, steering no whither. He may be successful in the activities of business, or the competitions of the State, but without infinite qualifications can hardly be regarded as a successful man. The questions he can answer are questions of government, arithmetic, and trade; the deeper questions, which go down to the very roots of life, form a riddle he cannot solve. He owns the things which make him secure against the day of want—so far as the day of want relates to his physical needs—but he has nothing laid by against the day of spiritual famine, nothing that will still the pain and restlessness of his heart, and satisfy the bitter hunger of his soul. That is, he has missed the greatest and secured the least; succeeded in the things that are frail and vanishing, and failed in those that are the most momentous and undying. It is a result which is easily reached, and which many a man, in the solemn moments of his life, is compelled to make the sad confession he has achieved. The old questions come to him unbidden, “What am I?” “Whither am I going?” “What is there on the other side of the dark boundary line of death?” It is in the answer which he gives to these questions that you can tell whether he has missed life or gained it, whether he has gloriously

won or fearfully failed. And the answer is to be found in faith—that faith in God and His Christ which joins our passing days on to the immortality, and runs the eternal purposes through our fleeting years.

And the faith that unites us to God, and reveals to us life's meaning and destiny, bestows upon us the everlasting good,—the treasures which the changes of time cannot touch, and which stay with us when the attractions of the world have passed away. What those possessions are, Paul tells us elsewhere, as in his description of the “fruits of the Spirit” he puts, as it were, into detail the sharp statement of Jesus Christ, “The kingdom of God is within you.” “Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control,”—these are the treasures we can take with us to the other side, and which are beyond the power of corrosion and of death. Without them no life can be said to have succeeded; with them none can be said to have failed.

It may be said that such possessions do not appeal very powerfully to those who believe only in external things, and value only the benedictions they regard as practical. There are many who appear to have been bereft of all power to appreciate spiritual facts and truths. The only realities they acknowledge are the things they “see and handle,” and they class all spiritual things with the ghosts and spectres of tradition, forgetting that it is the things that they “see and handle” that haunt men's dreams, and stealthily and relentlessly track their footsteps. From such a man the divinest and most inspiring truths are hidden. He understands the revelation to his hand, not the revelation to his heart. A gift in the shape of gold he can appreciate; a gift in the shape of a purer love, or a more exalted purpose, is sentimental and worthless, and for which he has no thanksgiving. He values the day-time only because it enables him to pull down his barns and build greater; the night has no beauty for him, and the stars no message of hope: the mountain stream is only so much water power; the waving forest only so many cubic feet of timber; and the great healing sun, symbol of the Light that would lighten every man that cometh into the world, only a

cheaper means of illumining the city streets than the machinery of men. The finer and enduring revelation he discards; the vulgar one he accepts. To all spiritual suggestion he is insensible and dead. He has a sharp understanding for the things that are practical, yet, with pitiful irony, he values power only in its outward semblance, and wealth only in its perishable forms. Yet until the time comes when graves shall be found into which passions, and thoughts, and memories, hopes, inspirations, love, shall be shovelled like so much earth, the unseen benediction will be the noblest, and the gift of a profounder insight, of a larger and tenderer sympathy, of a clearer perception of the truth, of a more constant power of sacrifice and self-denial, of a love of holiness more passionate and more deep,—the gift, in short, of faith and the Holy Ghost will be the most real and sacred and practical and blessed of all the gifts that God bestows upon mankind. Again, we say, that without this no life can be said to succeed, and with it none can be said to fail.

This secret of success may be owned of all: none can miss it who sincerely desires and seeks it. In the external departments of our life success is only awarded to the few. The world has only a few great leaders, statesmen, artists, poets, but in this larger kingdom of God, which deals with what we are rather than with what we have, even the lowliest and most diffident may gain a great reward. Here the man of humble life, who earns in obscurity his daily bread by the sweat of his brow, may rank with the greatest as a son of God.

Whether you have this secret is known to God and yourselves alone. If you have you know something of the joy of those who are one with Christ—of the peace which Paul says “passeth all understanding”—the peace which is beyond the power of your mind to describe, though not beyond the power of your heart to feel. If you have it not, may the appeal which comes to you through the words of this prisoner at Rome, receive the answer which alone is worthy to be given by one who is involved in the purposes of God—the answer of acceptance, of glad and eager consecration to Christ and to His work. Then, when at last you enter the haven into which He will lead you,

whether you enter quietly and peacefully, or, as Paul entered it, beaten and battered by unmerited sorrows and unexpected trials, you will be able like him to say with the calm, strong confidence of a heart that cannot be moved,—“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give to me at that day.”

GLOUCESTER.

HENRY SHAW.



The Desire of All Nations.

(*An Advent Meditation.*)

“AND THE DESIRE OF ALL NATIONS SHALL COME: AND I WILL FILL THIS HOUSE WITH GLORY, SAITH THE LORD OF HOSTS.”—*Haggai* ii. 7.

THE special mission of Haggai was to encourage the Jews in the rebuilding of the Temple. The seventy years of captivity in Babylon had passed away, and the Holy Land was again possessed by God's chosen people. Among the many things to discourage the builders of the second Temple was the fact that it fell far short of the glory of the first; yet the erection was to go on, and the topstone placed with rejoicing, because into it “the desire of all nations” would come, and it would be filled with the glory of the Lord of hosts. The shekinah had been withdrawn, but it would again appear, and the glory of the second house would ultimately excel that of the first. The Jews, doubtless, felt disappointed at the absence of external manifestations of the Divine presence, but the prophecy of our text would awaken and sustain expectation of manifestation that would fulfil the ardent longing of the universal heart of man. Progress and development mark the natural and moral government of God. In the plan of redemption, God always had “some better thing” in store for the world, till the desire of all nations came, and the second Temple

was filled with "the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His person." Let us enquire—

I.—WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THE PROPHECY CONTAINED IN THE TEXT? Obviously the prophecy points to the advent of the great Messiah who had been foreshadowed in types and ceremonies of Levitical economy, predicted in glowing utterances of Hebrew prophets before and during the captivity. Haggai was permitted to announce that Jehovah had not departed from His Divine purpose to come in very deed and dwell with man on the earth. The desire of all nations had been to have—

(a) *An Incarnate God.* All heathen religions have been the feeling of the human heart after God, the desire for the presence—local and visible—of the Almighty One. Hence the heathen have erected their temples, fashioned their gods, and, to satisfy the desires of their hearts, have bowed down before them. The soul of man cannot be satisfied with the abstract and metaphysical, it must have something tangible as basis and inspiration to worship. Man wants not "a stream of tendency that makes for righteousness," "an inexorable, universal law," "an inexhaustible and irresistible force," but a *personal, living, loving, ever-present God*. The desire of all nations has been to have—

(b) *An Almighty Saviour.* There is in every human breast a sense of guilt, as there is an inner consciousness of a Supreme Being. Men feel—taught by conscience, by the darkness or light of nature—that they need to propitiate the offended Deity, to whom they are amenable, in whom they live and move and have their being. The sacrifices offered on pagan altars, the cries of devotees to their gods, indicated the need for One who would be able and willing to save to the uttermost all who would come unto God by Him. The desire of all nations has been to have—

(c) *A revelation of the future state.* *Apprehensions* of a future life seem natural to the soul; *probabilities* of it are suggested by analogies in nature; *glimpses* of it were afforded under the Hebrew economy; but it was reserved for Christ to fulfil the desire of nations, and bring life and immortality to light by His Gospel. In these three respects it may fairly be concluded that the text points to the advent of Incarnate God.

This consummation, so devoutly to be wished, was to be accompanied by extraordinary social and moral phenomena. At the coming of Christ, Judea was to be shaken to its centre, and the enfeebled world moved at its base. Just when all human systems had failed to meet the desires of the human soul, Christ came, in whom all the nations of the earth are to be blessed. God had already filled the heavens with His glory, and all His works were vocal with His praise. He had descended at Sinai, and displayed His glory in the lightnings that covered the sky with flame. He filled the Temple of Solomon with the cloud of His presence, whose ineffable brightness overwhelmed the assembled worshippers with awe. But a brighter glory was in store for the Hebrew Church and the world. God's greatest glory is His love, and in Christ we have incarnate love, the Gospel of the glory of the blessed God. God's glory is nowhere so fully seen as in saving man. The great desire of all nations was to be satisfied, the moral needs of the world met. Man's longing for a Redeemer who would reveal the Divine Father, immortal life, and the way of peace, was not to be mocked. God's gracious purposes towards our race were to be accomplished in His own time and according to His own good pleasure.

II.—HAS THE PROPHECY OF OUR TEXT BEEN FULFILLED IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD. In the fulness of time, according to predictions uttered, by not only Haggai but other prophets, the Messiah came, and at a time when the event could be indelibly registered in the annals of the world. He came and lived a real life. He was not a phantom or a myth. He came to the Temple, was presented in the arms of Simeon; sat in the midst of the doctors and amazed them with His wisdom; frequented it during His public ministry, and by His matchless words and mighty deeds filled it with Divine glory. He met the desire of all nations in that He atoned for the sins of the whole world; opened the way for *pardon*, *purity*, and *peace*; revealed Himself as "the way, the truth, and the life." This shows *the transcendent excellence of Christianity* and *the Deity of Christ*, that all the moral cravings of humanity are satisfied in the Gospel. Man desires not only reconciliation with his Creator, to feel that God is his

loving Father, but to have peace, goodwill, and unity in society. Prophecy, and its exact fulfilment, an indisputable evidence of the truth of Christianity: the law, Psalms, and prophets bear witness to Christ. History bears witness to the Redeemer; the years of the Christian era echo as they pass, "Jesus was born in Bethlehem, in the days of Herod the king." The desire of all nations has come, for Christ was in Himself all that the heart of man can desire to make it happy now and hereafter. All the revelations of God centre and find their completion in Him. In the Gospel we have God's final declarations concerning *sin, righteousness, judgment, the soul, salvation, eternity*. The revelation of God, in the person of His Son, is sufficient to meet all the spiritual wants of every human soul, and the evidences of the divinity of the Gospel ought, therefore, to be satisfactory to every man. The desire of all nations came to the Temple, has come to our world; *has He come into our hearts?* He seeks *living* temples as His permanent abode. To human hearts He comes, and condescends to knock for admission. He delights to fill the human soul with the glory of His presence and love. His religion exalts and ennobles every faculty of human nature, for He not only comes to us, but *dwells in us*. In Christ the desire of all nations is met, for He answers every question upon holiness and happiness that can reasonably be asked. In Christianity we see the brightest glory of God, for it is perfectly adapted to save, sanctify, and glorify the souls of men.

It is thus that Christ, in His person and work, stands out in *bold and unique relief* among all the teachers and systems of religion ever presented to the world. He is the Sun of Righteousness, and all mere earth-born lights are eclipsed by His celestial radiance. He is the Great Physician of souls, mighty to save; all who have ever competed with Him have been miserable impostors. He meets the moral desires of all nations with appropriate and satisfying supplies; human philosophies only mock the cravings with serpents and stones. Does intellectual culture ask for "luminosity," "lucidity," &c.? they can be found in the perfect "light and sweetness" that centre in Christ. Does *sinful, suffering, dying* humanity cry for pardon, succour, sympathy, and

life? they are all to be found in full orb'd splendour in Him in whom dwelt the fulness of the Godhead bodily. Accept Christ and become like Him, then all our spiritual desires will be perfectly and for ever satisfied. Reject Him, and those desires will, of necessity, remain unsatisfied and unblest.

CLIFTON.

FREDERICK W. BROWN.

Trials, Duty, Victory.

(THOUGHTS FOR THE CLOSE OF THE YEAR).

“THERE WAS A CERTAIN NOBLEMAN WHOSE SON WAS SICK AT CAPERNAUM. WHEN HE HEARD THAT JESUS WAS COME OUT OF JUDEA INTO GALILEE, HE WENT UNTO HIM AND BESOUGHT HIM THAT HE WOULD COME DOWN AND HEAL HIS SON,” &c.—*John* iv. 46-51.

HERE is recorded a very touching incident, setting forth a nobleman's domestic trials and the efforts he made on behalf of his dying child to save his life. It shows us too the apparent difficulties which stood in the nobleman's way in the discharge of his parental duty. And, lastly, it depicts his faith and fervency of soul, his renewed exertions in the midst of discouragements, and his God-given success in Christ's marvellous display of Divine power and love in the healing of the nobleman's son.

Let us briefly notice these several points as applied to our own conditions, circumstances, and duties.

I.—OUR TRIALS IN LIFE. Where is the life that is without trials? It surely is not here on earth. Trials and difficulties are the common lot of all. They are as varied as our circumstances; whether high or low, rich or poor, learned or unlearned. Here is a nobleman, a man of title, of position, and of wealth, even he has his trials. His beloved son is at the point of death. How apt we are to forget, when we murmur, that this is a moral

world and that we are moral beings, made to be trained, drilled, and perfected by trials, hindrances, and sufferings. Inexperience does not see this. But assuredly if man is to be morally educated, purified, and ennobled, he must be tried, he "must be born again." Life is beset with difficulties and discouragements, like lions in the way. There is no rose without its thorns; no landscape without its darkening clouds; no sea without its storms; no life without its trials. Joseph had his evil brethren; Naaman was a leper; Daniel had his bitter opponents; St. Paul had his "thorn in the flesh"; even the blessed Lord was crucified. Think not that trials are all bitterness and all in vain. They are not lost. They lead true souls to higher efforts, to nobler duty and to God.

II.—OUR DUTY IN TRIAL. To do our duty is often difficult, but especially so in times of trial. How apt we are when trials come upon us to give up all effort and to sink down and down into the depths of gloom and despair. But duty bids us rouse at once to effort and to action. The oarsman, as his boat begins to fill with water, does not throw away his oars, but he pulls his vessel quickly to the shore. Our duty in trial is not to sit down in lamentation and woe, but to rise to action, to work and to seek till we find a remedy. The nobleman of our text did not sit down and mourn till his son was dead. He waited not, he rose at once to his duty, he sought a remedy, he sought a great Physician, he sought Christ. Our limbs, nerves, and muscles are not given us for idleness. Life is a great moral battle, to be morally fought and valiantly won. We are called to fight, not with swords and guns, but with truth and justice, goodness and love against wrong in every form, against sin in every shape. Let us do our duty then, though we perish in the fight. Let duty and love be our daily song, tis the song of all creation, the universe of heaven and earth. The birds and flowers, the beautiful earth and radiant stars, all join the archangels' songs of duty and of love.

III.—OUR DISCOURAGEMENTS IN DUTY. There is a heaven-born happiness in the consciousness of living effort to do our duty. We may not do all we ought to do, nor all we desire to do, but

the inward consciousness of daily living effort to do that which is our duty before God and man fills the heart with holy joy. In this the soul is braced and Divinely strengthened to meet the obstacles and discouragements of life. If we swim with the stream we shall find few difficulties in our way; but when our duty lies in the opposite course it will be hard pulling the boat along. It is easy to go on living a careless, indifferent, unrighteous life; but to live a true, a noble, a Christ-like life, we shall find many an enemy, many a hindrance, many a scoff, much bitter scorn. But a true man has true faith and true courage; and, with St. Paul, he can say, "None of these things move me." When the nobleman besought Jesus to heal his son, the Saviour did not go down at once in answer to his request. He replied, as if classing the nobleman with the multitude, "Except ye see signs and wonders ye will not believe." What a rebuke to the multitude, always greedy for excitement and strange things! What a trial to the nobleman's faith! What a disappointment to the anxious father's throbbing heart! At any moment his son might die! But did this discouragement drive the father away? No! He was too noble a man, too loving a father for that. A father's love, a father's duty sought to save the life of his son. Discouragement only fired his soul afresh, inspired and deepened his faith and gave new strength to love and duty. Who is struggling against sin, against injustice, against difficulties and discouragements? Go on; be brave, trust in God and do your duty. Disappointment may be hard to bear, but God is often nearest to us then.

IV.—OUR GOD-GIVEN VICTORY. Faith in Christ never yet lost its reward. A life, lived after Christ's example, will meet with many trials and disappointments, and often with bitterness of soul. But by these very trials faith will be strengthened, sin will be purified, and the spirit made radiant with heavenly light. True courage, true perseverance, true faith, true charity never fail, but are ever crowned with ultimate victory.

Is your cause good? Is your heart right with God? Then faint not, hold fast your faith, do your God-given duty and the

triumph shall be yours. "Sir," cried the nobleman, with clinging faith by love inspired, "come down ere my child die." The Saviour gazed in upon his loving, pleading heart, He read its truth, he saw his steadfast faith, and He gave him his heart's desire. "Go thy way; thy son liveth." The father believed the words, and went his way rejoicing. Here is faith's God-given victory.

How is it with us? Are we careless and indifferent to the pleadings of Christ's love? If so, we are drifting on to falls deeper and more fearful than Niagara. Are we living the life of faith and duty; faith in God and duty to our fellow men? Then happy are we. As the New Year dawns upon us let us renew our covenant with God. Let us live *to* Christ and *with* Christ, that we may be like Him and see Him as He is. Remember how He said, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

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CHRIST: AND PREACHERS AND CHURCHES.—"To preach Christ is to put one's self altogether out of the way,—to hide one's self, as it were, in Him,—so that His word and doctrine may have a more unobserved and perfect forthgoing. When you see a sect or denomination bringing out its great men, who cover each other continually with garments of praise and adulation, you may be pretty sure they are fast losing sight of the Master. . . . When churches are gathered around men, dependent upon the sensation men can produce, to be played by words, or amused by sky-rockets of eloquence, they are churches no more, but a mob of people to dispute when the show is over, and the rockets have gone out."—E. H. SEARS.

Homiletical Commentary.

NOTES ON THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

“If the Lord Will.”

Chapter iv. 13-17.—“GO TO NOW, YE THAT SAY, TO-DAY OR TO-MORROW WE WILL GO INTO SUCH A CITY, AND CONTINUE THERE A YEAR, AND BUY AND SELL, AND GET GAIN: WHEREAS YE KNOW NOT WHAT SHALL BE ON THE MORROW. FOR WHAT IS YOUR LIFE? IT IS EVEN A VAPOUR, THAT APPEARETH FOR A LITTLE TIME, AND THEN VANISHETH AWAY. FOR THAT YE OUGHT TO SAY, IF THE LORD WILL, WE SHALL LIVE, AND DO THIS, OR THAT. BUT NOW YE REJOICE IN YOUR BOASTINGS: ALL SUCH REJOICING IS EVIL. THEREFORE TO HIM THAT KNOWETH TO DO GOOD, AND DOETH IT NOT, TO HIM IT IS SIN.”

It is eighteen hundred years since James wrote these words; any one of us might write them to-day. For all that has come and gone during these centuries,—the progress of Christianity, the spread of civilization and of commerce, the long results of literature, science, and art, the dissemination everywhere of all kinds of knowledge by the aid of the printing press; for all that has come and gone, so far as the relevancy of these words to our own generation is concerned, it is the same as if nothing had come and gone. Blot out the intervening centuries, and all that they have done in the way of advancing the social, political, commercial interests of mankind; let the nineteenth century come close up to the first, and would not the one answer to the other as face to face in a glass? Are we not hearing continually, on every side, the echo of the words for which so far back as the first century even the disciples

The Word
of God a book
for all time.

of Jesus Christ needed to be rebuked, against which they needed to be warned: "To-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain." In the times of the apostle James, this was what was going on every day, this was the common, ordinary mode of thought and speech among men, merchants and everybody else; life and all its concerns were taken by them into their own hands, God was forgotten or ignored, their own right hand was to get them all their victories. In our own times, is it not just the same thing we see and hear; so much the same thing that we do not need to translate the first century language of the apostle into our nineteenth century vernacular? The very words accommodate themselves to the sense, and you shall hear to-morrow, re-echoed on every side, this very thing: "To-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain."

I have just said, blot out the intervening centuries, and you will find the words of the first applicable to the condition of the nineteenth: but do not blot them out, try to hear what men have been saying all these centuries to each other regarding this very thing, listen to what moralists and divines have spoken, and what do you

Human
testimony to
this
Scripture.

have from one and all but just a prolonged variation of James's theme; the proneness of men in all generations to plan and purpose as if they alone were the arbiters of their own destiny, as if they held all the threads in their own hands and could weave their lives into what forms and colours they chose. The Roman moralist, the Christian philosopher, the Protestant reformer, agree with the poet for all ages in emphasising the rebuke of the apostle of practical religion. "No man is so old but still he thinks he may live another year." . . . "Why shouldest thou disquiet thyself with thought of provision for that day whose evening thou art not sure to see?" "The princes and potentates when they take in hand an enterprise do not pray before they begin, but set to work calculating, settling it themselves how the business is to come to a prosperous issue: but our Lord God says unto them, For whom then do ye hold Me? For a cypher? Do I sit here in vain and to no purpose?"

Ye shall know that I will twist your accounts about finely, and make them all false reckonings." "There's a divinity that shapes our ends, rough hew them as we will."

"For what is this world's bliss,
That changeth as the moon,
My summer's day in lusty May,
Is darked before the noon."

"We decide for to-day, and a passing moment scatters our decisions as chaff before the wind. We resolve for to-morrow, to-morrow comes but to root up our resolutions. We scheme for our works to remain monuments of our power and wisdom, and the most minute, the most trivial event is sufficient to overturn all our purposes, and cast down to the dust the thoughts and the labours of a life." Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth. "For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then," even while you are looking at it, or the moment you have turned away from looking at it, "vanisheth away." Cicero, Chrysostom, Luther, Shakespeare, Solomon, James,—is it necessary to add to the inexhaustible list of testimonies to the proneness of men to form their plans and purposes as if they alone had the carrying of them out, as if He in whose hands is the breath of every living creature were to be put aside and have nothing more to do with the government of His own world. Blot out the intervening centuries, and the words apply to first and nineteenth century alike; fill in the intervening centuries, and their testimony but confirms the need for the apostle's rebuke. A text of this kind annihilates time, it is independent of history, it does not need to be illustrated by literature; all it needs is just that men should fairly look at it, should confront it, should let it come home to their consciences and their hearts.

The apostle has been exposing and condemning in several of its forms the sin of worldliness, the sin whose root and essence is pride of heart before God, arrogant independence of God, envious strife, evil speaking; and now a third, more common, no less sinful than either of these, the ignoring of God in the purposes and undertakings of

life, not feeling and not saying, "If the Lord will." Observe, for it needs to be observed, that it is not the forming of plans and purposes that we are here warned against; this is right, this is necessary; private business, the public welfare demands this. Men have to look far ahead, they have to be forethoughted and foresighted, otherwise their ventures will be misadventures, and they will be unfitted to do what reason and revelation command, to provide for their own households. What we are warned against is the infatuated folly, the sinful presumption of doing all this without taking into account the utter uncertainty of all human things, without humbly and reverently beginning and carrying through every undertaking in dependence upon God and in utter submissiveness to His will. It is perfectly right to say, "To-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain," if at every step of the way and in every transaction there be the spirit which leaves the next step, and the results of every step, in God's hands; it is a wicked denial of God's rule and sovereignty, of His Fatherly care, to say this self-same thing, to make sure of life, of health, of a sound mind, of a ready market, of good profits, and all for a whole year: all this, and God not in any of the thoughts.

It is obvious then that the apostle is not condemning prudent and pious foresight, that he is condemning imprudent, impious presumption, two things, which on the surface may look very much alike, which in their essence are as the poles asunder. This is obvious, even if we did not have the qualifying statement which shows that it is not the undertaking, but the spirit of the undertaking with which he is most concerned. Men must plan: yes, but how? As if everything were under their control, not subject to disease, or accident, or the cross-purposes and cross-designs of other men, not subject to the government of God? Or, as knowing that their purposes may be broken off at any moment and humbly submissive if they should, recognising that it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps; not knowing what an hour may bring forth, but leaving everything that concerns him in the hands of the All-Wise?—Men must plan: yes, but how? . . . "The mother

Not the Letter
but the
Spirit.

of Sisera looked out at a window and cried through the lattice, Why is his chariot so long in coming? Why tarry the wheels of his chariots? Her wise ladies answered her, yea, she returned answer to herself, Have they not sped? Have they not divided the prey? To Sisera a prey of divers colours, a prey of divers colours of needlework, meet for the necks of them that take the spoil."—They had planned, the Kenite was at peace, no harm could come from thence; while she rejoiced in her boastings, Sisera lay slain in the Kenite's tent! . . . "The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully, and he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do, I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods: and I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years: take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, *this night* thy soul shall be required of thee!" "Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth!" . . . "For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that."

And here again it is the spirit of the apostle's teaching and not the mere letter of it that we are to give heed to. It may be well sometimes to say it; it is better always to think and feel it. Paul, for example, sometimes said it, sometimes did not say it: but whether he said it or did not say it, he always thought and felt it. "I will come unto you shortly, if the Lord will"; "I must tarry a while with you if the Lord permit"; "And this will we do if God permit."—On the other hand, "I will come unto you when I shall pass through Macedonia"; "When I have performed this, I will come to you by Spain."—Sometimes *saying* it, sometimes *not saying* it, but always in the spirit of it, which is far better. For these expressions may become mere dead formulas, out of which the breath of life has departed, and men shall be as off-hand in saying, if the Lord will: as profane in their use of

the words as of any other. D.V., for example: to what common uses do we find the great and solemn thought, *if the Lord will*, put. God willing! Deo volente: D.V.,

"D.V."

and so you get the mystic letters stuck upon bills, carefully bracketed in large or in small letters according to the taste of the printer, in how many cases the merest emptiest formula, the religious thing to do. The motives, where it is anything else but a mere habit, may be, and doubtless are, praiseworthy, but when a Christian man intimates his intention, in the newspapers or by handbill, to give a religious address, why should it be thought necessary to insert D.V.? Is not the whole service conceived, undertaken, and carried out as an act of homage and service to the Divine will? Ye ought to say, "If the Lord will": ye ought to say it IN: ye ought to say it in so deeply that you would not need to say it at all. Perhaps those who are in the condition which James here rebukes *had* better say it; they have forgotten it; they are acting contrary to the very truth of it; perhaps saying it may deepen the feeling it till they shall feel it without needing to say it. Go to now; take time to think: consider carefully what you are doing; it is a loud call to thoughtfulness, and self-examination, and repentance.

Go to now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and buy, and sell, and get gain, instead of saying, as ye ought to say, if the Lord will, we shall live and do this or that. Yes, if the Lord will, we shall live; for what is your life, this life of yours on which, and on the continuance of which, all these plans and purposes of yours depend? It must surely be something permanent, stable, something rooted in the eternal! What is your life? The most transitory and uncertain of all things, liable to be ended by the merest accident; a false step, the touch of disease, any one of the thousand ills that flesh is heir to. What is your life? You have seen the white, fleecy cloud up in the blue sky, it seemed as if it might lie there for ever; you turned away your gaze from it for a moment, when you looked again it was gone. You have seen the morning mist lying on the mountain side, even as you gazed it disappeared. And it is on this that men build as if they were gods. Surely ye ought to say, if the Lord will, we shall live: if the Lord will, we shall do this or that.

But this is not what men do; they boast and vaunt themselves

in their proud speeches about what they are going to do to-day and to-morrow and next year; not only do they boast of what they are going to do in their own strength, but as if somewhere they had got the assurance that everything they set their hands to would prosper, they rejoice, they make a song, they exult in these boastings. It is a peculiar expression, but it is not a peculiar experience. "Don't you have any fears for me, I am strong, never had a headache in my life, I don't look like dying, just feel that arm! I'll let you see what I am made of yet, I can see my way before me, I have taken everything into account, and I don't think that anything will turn up to overturn my calculations, just leave it to me!" Men talk thus, rejoicing in their boastings: do we need the apostle to tell us that all such rejoicing is evil? Do we not feel it to be evil as we hear them talk in that foolish, boastful way, and do we not anticipate that their strength will yet be seen to be but weakness, their foresight blindness, and their wisdom the veriest folly?

Well, we know the truth of all these things, we assent to everyone of them, we have known everyone of them ever since we knew anything; there is nothing new, nothing fresh here. Ah, but do we act as we know; do we put this knowledge into our lives; do we plan as knowing this, as feeling this, as gladly taking a shelter from all the uncertainties of the future in this? If not, does not the condemnation of the Word of God come down heavy upon us, do we not acknowledge the justice of it: "therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin," aggravated sin, sin by way of conscience. "If I had not come unto them they had not had sin, but now they have no cloak for their sin." To have the light and to sin against the light, to know and not to do, is not this sin? "While ye have the light walk in the light, that ye may be children of light." "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest." "Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh."

"A professor of great reputation for wisdom and piety was once addressed by a student just entering the university. 'My parents have just given me leave to study the law, the thing I have been wishing for all my life, and I have now come to this
 And after that? university on account of its great fame, and mean to spare no pains in mastering the subject.' While he was thus running on the professor interrupted him: 'Well, and when you have got through your studies, what then?' 'Then I shall take my doctor's degree.' 'And then?' 'And then I shall have a number of difficult cases to manage, which will increase my fame, and I shall gain a great reputation.' 'And then?' 'Why, then there cannot be a question I shall be promoted to some high office or other: besides I shall make money and grow rich.' 'And then?' 'And then I shall live in honour and dignity, and be able to look forward to a happy old age.' 'And then?' '*And then, and then, I shall die!*' 'And then?' 'And then?' Like the young man in the gospels he could answer no more, but went away very sorrowful."

"Go to now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and buy and sell, and get gain: whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away."

GLASGOW.

PETER RUTHERFORD.

CHRISTIANITY IDENTIFIED WITH A PERSON.—"Nothing can be more obvious than that Christianity is frequently and commonly identified in men's minds with an ecclesiastical organization or institution, or with some religious or theological system. . . . The essential vitality of Christianity consists in its union with the person of Christ. Living Christianity is no theological system, or group of truths, however exalted or true, but personal union with a living person, and the possession of life received in and derived from Him."—STANLEY LEATHES, D.D.

GERMS OF PRACTICAL THOUGHT EVOLVED FROM
THE APOCALYPSE.

[The writer of these Homiletic Sketches aims not to decide between the numerous theories and speculations which the interpreters of this book have propounded. So far as his work is concerned it does not matter who the author may be, the exact time in which he lived, the place of his writing, or the peculiarities of his language. The whole book appears to his mind as a *grand, prophetic poem*, full of strange and grotesque symbols. As a prophecy, some have regarded it as *already fulfilled*, such as Grotius, Hammond, Bossuet, Calmet, Wetstein, Eichhorn, Hug, Herder, Ewald, Lücke, De Wette, Dusterdieck, Stuart, Lee, and Maurice. These are called the *Præterist* expositors. Some have regarded it as yet almost entirely *unfulfilled*. All events referred to, except those in the first three chapters, they take as pointing to what is yet to come. Among such interpreters in recent times are Drs. Todd, Maitland, Newton, De Burgh, &c. These are called *Futurists*. Some regard it as in a *progressive course* of fulfilment, running on from the first century to the end of time. Amongst these interpreters the following names are included : Mede, Sir I. Newton, Vitringa, Bengel, Woodhouse, Faber, E. B. Elliott, Wordsworth, Hengstenberg, Ebrard, &c. These are called *Historical* expositors. The present Homiletic Sketches will be drawn in the light of this school. The whole book is a symbolical representation of a great moral campaign between right and wrong, running on from the dawn of the Christian era to the crash of doom. Babylon here is, so to say, the metropolis of evil and Jerusalem the metropolis of good. The battle is not between the mere forms, organizations, and institutions of good and evil, but between their *spirit*, their essence. The victories of Christ here are, to use the language of Carpenter, "against all wrong-thoughtedness, wrong-heartedness, and wrong-spiritedness."]'

No. XIII.

The Words of Christ to the Congregation at Sardis.

"AND UNTO THE ANGEL OF THE CHURCH IN SARDIS WRITE ; THESE THINGS SAITH HE THAT HATH THE SEVEN SPIRITS OF GOD, AND THE SEVEN STARS ; I KNOW THY WORKS, THAT THOU HAST A NAME THAT THOU LIVEST, AND ART DEAD. BE WATCHFUL, AND STRENGTHEN THE THINGS WHICH REMAIN, THAT ARE READY TO DIE : FOR I HAVE NOT FOUND THY WORKS PERFECT BEFORE GOD. REMEMBER THEREFORE HOW THOU HAST RECEIVED AND HEARD, AND HOLD FAST, AND REPENT. IF THEREFORE THOU SHALT NOT WATCH, I WILL COME ON THEE AS A THIEF, AND THOU SHALT NOT KNOW WHAT HOUR I WILL COME UPON THEE. THOU HAST A FEW NAMES EVEN IN SARDIS WHICH HAVE NOT DEFILED THEIR GARMENTS ; AND THEY SHALL WALK WITH ME IN WHITE : FOR THEY ARE WORTHY. HE THAT OVERCOMETH, THE SAME SHALL BE CLOTHED IN WHITE RAIMENT ; AND I WILL NOT BLOT OUT HIS NAME OUT OF THE BOOK OF LIFE, BUT I WILL CONFESS HIS NAME BEFORE MY FATHER, AND BEFORE HIS ANGELS. HE THAT HATH AN EAR, LET HIM HEAR WHAT THE SPIRIT SAITH UNTO THE CHURCHES."—*Rev. iii. 1-6.*

"SARDIS," says Dr. Eadie, "was a city of ancient Lydia. Its modern name is Sert Kalesi, and it lies about thirty miles south-east of Thyatira, and two miles south of the

river Hermus. It is, however, but a miserable village, inhabited chiefly by shepherds, though it is one of the stopping places of the Persian caravans. The original city

was plundered by Cyrus, and afterwards desolated by an earthquake, the ruins of it being still visible a little distance to the south of the present town. Nothing is now to be seen but a few mud huts, inhabited by ignorant, stupid, filthy Turks, and the only men who bear the Christian name are at work all day in their mill. Everything seems as if God had cursed the place and left it to the dominion of Satan." A modern traveller says, "I sat beneath the sky of Asia to gaze upon the ruins of Sardis from the banks of the golden-sanded Pactolus. Beside me were the cliffs of that Acropolis which centuries before the hardy Median scaled while leading on the conquering Persians whose tents had covered the very spot on which I was reclining. Before me were the vestiges of what had been the palace of the gorgeous Croesus; within its walls were once congregated the wisest of mankind, Thales, Cleotolus, and Solon. Far in the distance were the gigantic tumuli of the Lydian monarch, and around them spread those very plains once trodden by the

countless hosts of Xerxes when hurrying on to find a sepulchre at Marathon. But all had passed away! There before me were the fanes of a dead religion and the tombs of forgotten monarchs and the palm tree that waved in the banquet-halls of kings."

Who founded the Christian community at Sardis, or the exact period when the Gospel was first preached, there are questions that have not been, and perhaps cannot be, settled. The address of Christ to this community, as recorded in these verses, forcibly calls our attention to the consideration of three things, *the general character of the many, the exceptional character of the few, and the absolute Judge of all*. Notice—

I.—THE GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE MANY. They were in a very lamentable condition.

First: They had a reputation for being what they were not. "*Thou hast a name that thou livest, and (thou) art dead.*" It was bad enough for them to be "*dead*," that is, all but destitute of that supreme sympathy with spiritual goodness which is the essence

of moral life. It was worse still for them to have the reputation of life, and for them to believe in that reputation. The sight of death is bad enough, but death garbed and decorated with the semblances of life makes it more ghastly to behold. How this community obtained this name for living, this high reputation in the neighbourhood, does not appear, albeit it is not difficult to guess. Perhaps it made loud professions, appeared very zealous and active, and paraded its affected virtues. Then, as now, perhaps, men were taken by their contemporaries to be rather what they appeared than what they were. In these days, and in our England, there are Churches that have the reputation of wonderful usefulness. All their doings, their prayers, their sprinklings and dippings, their pulpit deliverances and their psalmodes, their architectural expansions and numerical additions are emblazoned in the so-called "Christian" journals, so that they have a great name to live, whereas spiritually they may be all but dead. Reputation is one thing, character

is another. Everywhere in a corrupt world like this, the basest characters have the brightest reputation, and the reverse. The barren fig-tree was covered with luxuriant leafage. "*Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.*"

Secondly: They were in a state of spiritual consumption. "*That are ready to die.*" It would seem that whilst they were not *all* spiritually dead, that there was a spiritual consumption amongst some. "*Things ready to die.*" What things are these? The greatest things in the universe, eternal principles of virtue and truth. What things are comparable to these? To them literatures, markets, governments, are puerilities. There is a spiritual consumption and the symptoms are manifest. Weakness, morbid appetites, false views of self.

Thirdly: They were in a state requiring prompt and urgent attention. "*Be (thou) watchful and strengthen (stablish) the things which remain, that are (which were) ready to die.*" What is to be done? (1) They were to be vigilant. "*Watchful,*" wakeful, to shake off slothfulness, open their

eyes to eternal realities, fan the dying sparks into a flame. (2) They were to be curative. "*Strengthen the things which remain.*" How strengthen? Appropriate the true remedial element, fruit from the tree of life, use wholesome food, the sincere milk of the word, take proper exercise, inaction leads to disease, "exercise thyself unto godliness," in breathe the pure atmosphere of holiness. (3) They were to be recollective. "*Remember therefore how thou hast received.*" Call up all the good of the past. (4) They were to be repentant. "*Hold fast and repent.*" They were to renounce all that was pernicious to spiritual health and pursue a right course. "*Hold fast.*" Grasp with all the tenacity of their being the good that comes up to memory, as the drowning man lays hold of the rope thrown out on the surging waves.

Fourthly: They were in a state of alarming danger. "*If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.*" Such words as these Christ uttered while a tenant of this

earth (Matt. xxiv. 32). Retribution generally moves stealthily as a thief, "the feet of the gods are shod with wool," says the old Greek proverb. Notice—

II.—THE EXCEPTIONAL CHARACTER OF THE FEW. "*Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled* (did not defile) *their garments.*" "These few names," says Dr. Tait, "are here to the credit and honour of the Church, the few 'things' in connection with the Church in Pergamos were against it and to its condemnation. He who was the Angel of the Church does not seem to have known the few names, just as the prophet did not know the seven thousand in Israel who had not bowed their knees to Baal." Here then is goodness amidst social depravity. Three remarks are suggested—

First: That true goodness can exist under *external circumstances the most corrupt*. Sardis was one of the most dissolute cities of ancient times, but here were Christians. Man is not the creature of circumstances. Observe—

Secondly: That true goodness, wherever it exists, en-

gages the specific attention of Christ. Christ noticed the goodness in Sardis; and why?

(1) Because it is the highest manifestation of God upon earth. (2) Because it is the result of His mediatorial mission. (3) Because on it depends the progress of humanity. Observe—

Thirdly: That true goodness will *ultimately be distinguished by a glorious reward.* The words, “*walk with Me,*” &c., imply three ideas. (1) Triumph. (2) Fellowship. (3) Progress. Notice—

III.—THE ABSOLUTE JUDGE OF ALL. Who is the absolute Judge both of the *many* and the *few*? He is thus described: “*These things saith He that hath the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars.*” The absolute Judge of character is here presented in three connections.

First: In connection with the highest influence. “*He that hath the seven Spirits of God.*” Elsewhere we read: “He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him” (John iii. 34). The Divine Spirit is everywhere. The *amount*

of its possession by any moral being is conditioned by that being’s receptive capacity. No man ever appeared on earth who had the receptive capacity in such measure as Christ had it. He was *filled* with it. He opened His ministry by saying, “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me,” &c. The more a man has of this Spirit the more he can communicate of life and power and blessedness. He is here presented—

Secondly: In connection with the highest ministry. “*The seven stars.*” These were, as we have seen, the Angels of the seven Churches. What is the highest human ministry? The ministry of the Gospel. Those engaged in this work are here called “*stars,*” and these stars are in the hands of Christ. He moulds them with His influence, He burnishes them with His holiness, He fixes them in their orbits, He guides and sustains them in their spheres. He is in truth their centre and sun. From Him they derive their order, their vitality, and their power. He is here presented—

Thirdly: In connection with

the highest Being. "*I will confess his name before My Father.*" The Father is the greatest Being in the universe. The relationship of Son implies (1) *Causation*. (2) *Resemblance*. (3) *Reciprocal*

love. His Son identifies Himself with all His true disciples. "*I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.*"

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No. XIV.

The Words of Christ to the Church at Philadelphia.

"AND TO THE ANGEL OF THE CHURCH IN PHILADELPHIA WRITE; THESE THINGS SAITH HE THAT IS HOLY, HE THAT IS TRUE, HE THAT HATH THE KEY OF DAVID, HE THAT OPENETH, AND NO MAN SHUTTETH; AND SHUTTETH, AND NO MAN OPENETH; I KNOW THY WORKS: BEHOLD, I HAVE SET BEFORE THEE AN OPEN DOOR, AND NO MAN CAN SHUT IT: FOR THOU HAST A LITTLE STRENGTH, AND HAST KEPT MY WORD, AND HAST NOT DENIED MY NAME. BEHOLD, I WILL MAKE THEM OF THE SYNAGOGUE OF SATAN, WHICH SAY THEY ARE JEWS, AND ARE NOT, BUT DO LIE; BEHOLD, I WILL MAKE THEM TO COME AND WORSHIP BEFORE THY FEET, AND TO KNOW THAT I HAVE LOVED THEE. BECAUSE THOU HAST KEPT THE WORD OF MY PATIENCE, I ALSO WILL KEEP THEE FROM THE HOUR OF TEMPTATION, WHICH SHALL COME UPON ALL THE WORLD, TO TRY THEM THAT DWELL UPON THE EARTH. BEHOLD, I COME QUICKLY: HOLD THAT FAST WHICH THOU HAST, THAT NO MAN TAKE THY CROWN. HIM THAT OVERCOMETH WILL I MAKE A PILLAR IN THE TEMPLE OF MY GOD, AND HE SHALL GO NO MORE OUT: AND I WILL WRITE UPON HIM THE NAME OF MY GOD, AND THE NAME OF THE CITY OF MY GOD, WHICH IS NEW JERUSALEM, WHICH COMETH DOWN OUT OF HEAVEN FROM MY GOD: AND I WILL WRITE UPON HIM MY NEW NAME. HE THAT HATH AN EAR, LET HIM HEAR WHAT THE SPIRIT SAITH UNTO THE CHURCHES."—*Rev. iii. 7-13.*

ON a slope of Mount Timorous stood Philadelphia, a city of Lydia, lying between Sardis and Laodicea. Attalus Philadelphus, after whose name it was called Philadelphia, founded it B.C. 140. It was a commercial city of command-

ing position and considerable importance, and well fortified withal. Through its adjoining valley the celebrated Xerxes led his forces on his way to Greece. On account of the volcanic nature of its soil it became celebrated for

the cultivation, and the excellence of its vines. It had been visited by numerous earthquakes, and in the reign of Tiberius most of its population forsook it and fled to the fields, apprehending destruction. It survives to the present day, and is called by the Turks, "Allah-Shekr," the city of God. The ruins of a church wall are still visible, and about 5000 members of the Greek Church, with a bishop and about fifteen clergymen, reside in its midst. Nowhere else is it mentioned in sacred Scripture.

This wonderful letter brings under our notice, *a character to be adored, an energy to be coveted, and a destiny to be sought.*

I.—A CHARACTER TO BE ADORED. This character is here exhibited as—

First: Holy. "*He that is holy.*" No man ever appeared on this earth so entirely and unquestionably pure as Christ was. He was "separate from sinners." None of His most malignant contemporaries could convince Him of sin. Judas after the betrayal cried out, "I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent

blood." He was, indeed, the holy, the harmless, the undefiled Son of God. His spotless and undoubted holiness is a most uncontrovertible argument for the divinity of His Gospel. His character is here exhibited as—

Secondly: True. "*He that is true.*" He is true in the highest sense. (1) True in *sentiment*. All His sympathies were in accord with eternal reality. (2) True in *speech*. All His language was in exact agreement with His sentiments. (3) True in *character*. No shifting from eternal right. "To this end was I born, to this end came I into the world, to bear witness to the truth." He stands in the world's history, amidst the world's shams, like the sun amidst the ever shifting clouds. His character is here exhibited as—

Thirdly: Supreme. "*He that hath the key of David.*" What this means I know not. It cannot mean, however, that Christ in any moral sense resembled the moral character of David, who was undoubtedly one of the worst men whose name is enrolled on the world's black scroll of human criminals.

One thing however is clear, that David obtained terrible authority over all the resources of Israel. He had a "key" to the resources of the kingdom, and Christ has a key to the moral empire of heaven. He has supremacy of the highest kind. "*He that openeth, and no man shall shut; He that shutteth, and no man shall open.*" "He dispenses and He withholds God's treasures; He gives or He denies this or that talent, this or that blessing. In a yet more solemn meaning of the words, it is His to admit into and His to exclude from the eternal kingdom of glory. In spiritual and eternal things, wherever there is a door Christ has the key of it." *Dr. Vaughan.* All the doors to human usefulness, dignity, and happiness are at the disposal of Christ. Here we have—

II.—AN ENERGY TO BE COVETED. "*Thou hast a little strength*" (power). This Church had a little power. What was it? Not physical force, not intellectual capacity, not regal rule, but moral. Force to resist the wrong and pursue the right, force to serve the Almighty and to bless man-

kind. In relation to this moral strength notice—

First: It is the energy of true usefulness. "*Behold, I have set before thee an open door* (a door opened), *and no man can* (which none can) *shut it: for thou hast a little strength.*" It is implied that a little moral strength fits a man for usefulness to some extent. Hence the door of opportunity is thrown open to him. Every man has a mission in life, but he only is qualified to enter on it who has moral strength. Alas, the millions are morally impotent, and they live and die without entering on the prosecution of their great duty in life.

Secondly: It is the energy of loyal obedience. "*And hast kept* (didst keep) *My word.*" This moral strength enables a man to hold on to duty, to hold on to the right with all the tenacity of life, to feel with Job, "though He slay me yet will I trust in Him"; like Paul to say, "I count not my life dear unto me," &c.

Thirdly: It is the energy of true courage. "*And hast not denied* (didst not deny) *My name.*" "The tenses used, says *Bishop Carpenter*, "point

back to some epoch in the history of this Church when some heavy trial or persecution arose which tested the sincerity, fidelity, or Christian love of the faithful." Who can estimate the temptation which every good man has in a world of infidels, often malignant, to deny his Lord and Master? Peter yielded to it. What invincible courage is required! Courage like that which Paul had when he said, "God forbid that I should glory," &c.; and again, "Who shall separate me from the love of Christ? shall tribulation?" &c.

Fourthly: It is the energy of moral sovereignty. "*Behold, I will make them of (I give of) the synagogue of Satan (of them) which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.*" Who are those spoken of as "*of the synagogue of Satan?*" Were they the Judaising Christians, or persecuting Jews? Why spend time with Trench, or other critics, to start such an enquiry? No one can determine, nor does it matter; they were moral an-

tagonists to the congregation at Philadelphia. Concerning them we are here told that the men of moral strength will bring them to their feet; they will not only subdue them, but inspire them with love. High moral power is the highest sovereignty that one man can wield over another; it subdues the heart. Political rule is but a mere worthless shadow and pretence compared with moral.

Fifthly: It is the energy of Divine approval and protection. "*Because thou hast kept (didst keep) the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation.*" "Moral strength," says Canon Tait, "is not greatest when most demonstrative: on the contrary, to calmly await the issues of God's dealings, as our blessed Redeemer did, and bless a scoffing world from beneath His crown of thorns, is an illustration of moral strength greater than the excitement which leads the soldier into the thick of the battle, or to charge the enemy at the canon's mouth." Notice here—

III.—A DESTINY TO BE SOUGHT. What a distinction

awaits those who possess and rightly employ this true moral strength!

First: A crown lies within their reach. "*Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man (one) take thy crown.*" Christ is coming to every man and coming with speed, coming in the events of man's history and in his exit by death. When He comes there is a "crown" for him, if he holds faithfully on to the true and the right. The allusion here is to the public games of Greece, in which the winner obtained a garland of laurels. But what is that garland to the crown here referred to? The eternal weight of glory, a "crown" which shall out-shine yon permanent sun. "Be faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life."

Secondly: Divine security is assured. "*Him (He) that overcometh will I make (I will make him) a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go (out thence) no more out.*" "The promise," says an eminent critic, "is that of a secure and permanent position in God's heavenly temple. Philadelphia is said to have

been singularly liable to earthquakes; not a building, common or sacred, but it might suddenly fall in ruins. The promise here made is that no such risks shall await the heavenly temple or those who have been built into it."

Thirdly: Sublime distinction is promised. "*I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from My God: and I will write upon him My (Mine own) new name.*" "On the sides of the four marble pillars which survive as ruins of Philadelphia, inscriptions are to be found. The writing would be the name of God, the name of the heavenly Jerusalem, the new, unknown name of Christ Himself. The allusion is to the golden frontlet inscribed with the name of Jehovah. He will reflect the likeness of God; and not only so, he will bear the tokens—now seen in all clearness—of his heavenly citizenship. And a further promise implies that in the day of the last triumph, as there will be new revealings of Christ's power, there will

be unfolded to the faithful and victorious new and higher possibilities of purity. Thus does Scripture refuse to recognise any finality which is not a beginning as well as an end,—a landing stage in the great law of continuity.”

CONCLUSION.—“I cannot,” says *Trench*, “leave this epistle, so full of precious promises to a Church which having little strength had yet held fast the word of Christ’s patience, without citing a remarkable passage about it from Gibbon, in which he writes like one who almost believed that the threatening promises of God did fulfil themselves in history. ‘In the loss of Ephesus the Christians deplored the fall of the Revelations: the desolation is complete, and the temple of Diana or the church of Mary will equally elude the search of the curious traveller. The circus and three stately theatres of Laodicea are now

peopled with wolves and foxes: Sardis is reduced to a miserable village: the God of Mahomet, without a rival or a son, is invoked in the mosques of Thyatira and Pergamos; and the populousness of Smyrna is supported by the foreign trade of the Franks and Armenians. Philadelphia alone has been saved by prophecy or courage. At a distance from the sea, forgotten by the emperors, encompassed on all sides by the Turk, her valiant citizens defended their religion and freedom above fourscore years, and at length capitulated with the proudest of the Ottomans. Among the Greek colonies and Churches of Asia, Philadelphia is still erect—a column in a scene of ruins—a pleasing example that the paths of honour and safety may sometimes be the same.’”

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No. XV.

The Words of Christ to the Church at Laodicea.

“AND UNTO THE ANGEL OF THE CHURCH OF THE LAODICEANS WRITE; THESE THINGS SAITH THE AMEN, THE FAITHFUL AND TRUE WITNESS, THE BEGINNING OF THE CREATION OF GOD; I KNOW THY WORKS, THAT THOU ART NEITHER COLD NOR HOT: I WOULD THOU WERT COLD OR HOT. SO THEN BECAUSE THOU ART LUKEWARM, AND NEITHER COLD NOR HOT, I WILL SPUE THEE OUT OF MY MOUTH. BECAUSE THOU SAYEST, I AM RICH, AND INCREASED WITH GOODS, AND HAVE NEED OF NOTHING; AND KNOWEST NOT THAT THOU ART WRETCHED, AND MISERABLE, AND POOR, AND BLIND, AND NAKED: I COUNSEL THEE TO BUY OF ME GOLD TRIED IN THE FIRE, THAT THOU MAYEST BE RICH; AND WHITE RAIMENT, THAT THOU MAYEST BE CLOTHED, AND THAT THE SHAME OF THY NAKEDNESS DO NOT APPEAR; AND ANOINT THINE EYES WITH EYESALVE, THAT THOU MAYEST SEE. AS MANY AS I LOVE, I REBUKE AND CHASTEN: BE ZEALOUS THEREFORE, AND REPENT. BEHOLD, I STAND AT THE DOOR, AND KNOCK: IF ANY MAN HEAR MY VOICE, AND OPEN THE DOOR, I WILL COME IN TO HIM, AND WILL SUP WITH HIM, AND HE WITH ME. TO HIM THAT OVERCOMETH WILL I GRANT TO SIT WITH ME IN MY THRONE, EVEN AS I ALSO OVERCAME, AND AM SET DOWN WITH MY FATHER IN HIS THRONE. HE THAT HATH AN EAR, LET HIM HEAR WHAT THE SPIRIT SAITH UNTO THE CHURCHES.”—*Rev. iii. 14-22.*

“LAODICEA is in the southwest of Phrygia, on the river Lycus, not far from Colosse, lying between it and Philadelphia, destroyed by an earthquake A.D. 62, rebuilt by its wealthy citizens without the help of the State. This wealth (arising from the excellence of its wools) led to a self-satisfied, lukewarm state in spiritual things. In Col. iv. 16, it is mentioned. The Church in later times was flourishing, for one of the councils at which the canon of Scripture was determined

was held in Laodicea in A.D. 361. Hardly a Christian is now to be found near its site.”—*Fausset.*

We have here certain solemn and significant facts concerning *a corrupt Church*, such a Church as that which was existing at this time in Laodicea.

I.—ITS REAL CHARACTER WAS THOROUGHLY KNOWN. There was an eye that peered into its deepest depths, knew well its moral elements and temperature. He who thus

looked into and through it is thus described. (1) He is "*the Amen.*" This is the Hebrew word for "verily," or "truly," a word of energetic assertion and familiar use. In Christ, we are told, "is Yea and Amen." He is positive and declarative truth. What He predicates is true to reality, what He predicts will be realised, whether lamentable or otherwise. (2) He is "*the faithful and true Witness.*" What is a true witness? (a) One who has an absolute knowledge of the subject of which he affirms. And (b) one who is absolutely above all temptation to misrepresent. Christ has no motive to deceive, no evil to dread, no good to gain. (3) He is "*the beginning of the creation of God.*" He seems not only to have been the First of the creation, but in some sense the Originator. He is the beginning, the continuance, and purpose of all. This is a mystery, unfathomed, perhaps fathomless. This is the transcendent Being who knew thoroughly this Laodicean Church, and who knows all Churches. "*I know thy works.*" Know them in their

hidden germs and ever multiplying branches.

"O may these thoughts possess my breast

Where'er I roam, where'er I rest,
Nor let my weaker passions dare
Consent to sin for God is near."

Observe—

II.—ITS SPIRITUAL INDIFFERENTISM IS DIVINELY ABHORRENT. "*I would thou wert cold or hot.*" Cold water is refreshing, hot water is sometimes pleasant, the tepid is always more or less sickening. Well does an old writer say, "Lukewarmness or indifference in religion is the worst temper in the world. If religion is a real thing it is the most excellent thing, and therefore we should be in good earnest in it: if it is not a real thing it is the vilest imposture, and we should be earnest against it. If religion is worth anything, it is worth everything, an indifference here is inexcusable."

First: Spiritual indifferentism is a most *incongruous* condition. All nature seems in earnest: seas and stars are on the gallop; plants and animals rush onward on the lines of decay or growth, the minds of all moral beings are

flowing with more or less speed in one direction or another.

Secondly: Spiritual indifference is a most *incorrigible* condition. Theoretical infidelity we may break down by argument, but moral indifference cannot be touched by logic. The spiritually indifferent man shouts out his creed every Sunday, damns the Atheist, and yet himself is "without God in the world." Truly such a state of mind must be abhorrent to Him who demands that all should love Him with their whole heart, soul, and strength. What an awful supposition that man can sicken and disgust the Infinite. "*I will spue thee out of My mouth.*" Moral depravity nauseates the holy universe. Observe—

III.—Its SELF-DECEPTION IS TERRIBLY ALARMING. "*Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods (have gotten riches), and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched (the wretched one), and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.*"

First: Look at the condition in which they fancied

themselves. "*I am rich and increased with goods.*" They fancied themselves rich and independent. "*Have need of nothing.*" They wished to be all this, and the wish is evermore the father to the thought. Ah me, it is by no means uncommon for men to fancy themselves to be what they are not. If you go into lunatic spheres there you may see dwarfs fancying themselves giants and illustrious heroes, paupers thinking they are millionaires, and poor beggars kings of the first order. But elsewhere I find in all the departments of human life that is considered to be sane, scenes scarcely less absurd. In the so-called world of aristocracy and fashion what do we find? Human bipeds, male and female, priding themselves in their breed, imagining that some Norman or other blood flows in their veins altogether different to that which courses through the veins of the tradesman, the mechanic, and the labourer. The so-called sane men must be mad not to laugh at this madness, and fawning flunkies must be mad not to denounce it.

Secondly: Look at the condition in which they really are. "*And knowest not that thou art wretched* (the wretched one), *and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.*" "*Wretched,*" though they may dance and sing; pitiable, though lauded by princes, premiers, and peers. "*Blind,*" though the physical optics are sound; and "*naked,*" though robed in splendour. Wretched, pitiable, blind, naked in soul. What a condition is this! What terrible self-deception! "The first and worst of all frauds," says Festus, "is to cheat oneself. All sin is easy after that." Observe—

IV.—ITS MISERABLE CONDITION NEED NOT BE HOPELESS.

First: Recovery is freely offered. "*I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried* (refined) *in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment*" (garments), &c. Is there irony here? How can the poor buy gold, become rich, procure white garments, and salve for the diseased eyes? No, there is no irony here. The blessings here offered require no outlay of material wealth. All is to be won by true faith,

and all can believe. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come drink," &c.

Secondly: Recovery is Divinely urged. "*Behold, I stand at the door, and knock.*" Here observe (1) Christ's attitude towards the soul. "*I stand at the door, and knock.*" He does not come occasionally and depart. He "*stands,*" implying His deep concern, His infinite condescension, and His wonderful patience. He waits to be gracious. Observe (2) Christ's action upon the soul. He stands not as a statue, but knocks; knocks at the door of intellect with truths, at the door of conscience with principles, at the door of love with transcendent charms. Observe (3) Christ's purpose with the soul. His mission is not to destroy but to save it. "*I will come in to him.*" The language implies (a) Inhabitation. "*I will come in to him.*" (b) Identification. "*Sup with him and he with Me.*" Thus sinners are urged to deliver themselves from their miserable condition.

Thirdly: Recovery is Divinely rewarded. "*To him* (he) *that overcometh will I*

grant (I will give to him) to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set (sat) down with My Father in His throne." What are the thrones here? Are they some material seats in some radiant and remote part of the universe,—the one provided for the Father and the other for the Son? The question is childish, sensuous, and unspiritual. What is the true throne of a human soul? (1) It is the throne of an *approving conscience*. That

mind alone can rest whose conscience applauds him, and that soul alone can feel exalted and dignified whose conscience chimes to him, "well done." (2) It is the throne of *moral rule*. He who subordinates the material to the spiritual, the animal to the intellectual, the intellectual to the moral, and the moral to God, occupies the true throne. He is king and none other.

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"Is it that God forgives or loves a man for believing that Jesus Christ died for him to take away his sins? No one can believe such an absurdity who exercises his reason at all. No; the use of faith is just that a man by knowing the actual state of God's feelings towards him, by knowing the reality and intensity of His forgiving love to him, may have perfect confidence in God, and thus that his heart may open and let God's living Spirit enter."—T. ERSKINE.

NOTES ON THE APOCALYPSE.

No. I.

Man's Higher Sphere of Being.—Humanly Accessible.

"AFTER THIS I LOOKED, AND, BEHOLD, A DOOR WAS OPENED IN HEAVEN: AND THE FIRST VOICE WHICH I HEARD WAS AS IT WERE OF A TRUMPET TALKING WITH ME; WHICH SAID, COME UP HITHER, AND I WILL SHEW THEE THINGS WHICH MUST BE HEREAFTER."—*Rev. iv. 1.*

DISROBE this chapter of its strange metaphorical costume, brush away all the symbols, and there appears a super-mundane world, here called heaven,—man's higher sphere of being; a world this, unseen by the outward eye, unheard by the outward ear, untouched by the tactile nerve, lying away altogether from our five senses. That such a world exists is, to say the least, highly probable, if not morally certain. Universal reason conducts to the belief in, and the universal heart yearns for, such a scene. He who is so thoroughly acquainted with the universe as to be incapable of a mistake, so inflexibly sincere as to be incapable of deception, has said, "In My Father's house are many mansions, if it were not so I would have told you."

Now this super-mundane world, or man's higher sphere of being, we have here presented in two aspects,—*humanly accessible* and

spiritually entered. Each of these we shall employ as the germ of a separate homily. In the text it appears as *humanly accessible* Notice—

I.—THERE IS A DOOR TO ADMIT "*A door was opened in heaven.*" What is the "*door*"? Christ says, "I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture" (John x. 9). He shall enter into this super-mundane world with absolute safety and abundant provision. He is "*the way.*" Christ's absolute moral excellence makes Him the door of admission to all that is pure, beautiful, and joyous in the universe. "Beholding, as in a glass, the face of the Lord, we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory," &c. Two things may be predicated about this door.

First: It is *transparent.* He

who looks into Christ's character looks into heaven. In His spirit we see the light that animates all heaven, and the principles that set all heaven to music. He who knows Christ experimentally knows heaven, and no other.

Secondly: It is *ample*. Millions have passed through it, and millions more will to the end of time; thousands are passing through it, and all the men of coming generations will find it wide enough. Notice—

II.—THERE IS A VOICE TO WELCOME. "*And the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking (speaking) with me; which said (one saying), Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be (come to pass) hereafter.*" Whither? Up the heights of the starry universe. Thither in imagination we might ascend. Who, indeed, in the stillness of the night, has not heard as it were a "*trumpet*" coming down into his soul from those bright orbs which in teeming legions traverse the infinite fields above.

"Whoever gazed upon their shining,
Nor turned to earth without repining,
Nor longed for wings to fly away,
And meet with them eternal day."

"*Come up hither,*" they seem to say. Let not your minds be confined to your little, cloudy, stormy,

perishing planet. Earth was only intended as the temporary home of your bodies, not the dwelling place of your souls. The great universe is the domain of mind. We roll and shine in our mighty spheres around you to win you away to the serene, the height, and the boundless. "*Come up hither*" immortal man, wing your flight from orb to orb, system to system; count our multitudes, mark our movements, gauge our dimensions, breathe in our brightness, rise beyond us, scale the wondrous heavens still far away, revel in the Infinite, be lost in God. But the elevation to which we are called is not local but moral. "Seek those things which are above." What are they? Truth, rectitude, holiness, fellowship with the Infinite. Herein is true soul elevation. To this the "*trumpet*" bids us. Hear this trumpet from the infinite silences around you, from departing saints above you, from the depths of conscience within you, "*come up hither.*"

CONCLUSION.—Are we morally ascending? Then we shall experience three things. (1) Increasing dominion over the world. (2) Constant growth in moral force. (3) Augmented interest in the spiritual domain.

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No. II

Man's Higher Sphere of Being.—Spiritually Entered.

"AND IMMEDIATELY I WAS IN THE SPIRIT: AND, BEHOLD, A THRONE WAS SET IN HEAVEN, AND ONE SAT ON THE THRONE," &c.—*Rev. iv. 2-11.*

WE need not suppose that the super-mundane world appeared to John's bodily eye in the forms in which it is here presented. It was a mental vision and nothing more, and a mental vision is often more real, more significant, more impressive than a material. Commentators of this book have treated these objects as those which were addressed to the senses of the apostle, and have thus turned it into a wilderness of confusion; and preachers have used it to excite the imagination, stir the sensibilities, and stimulate the wildest and idlest speculations concerning man's higher sphere of being. The whole is a mental vision. We shall take the vision not as a symbolic puzzle, or even a metaphorical representation, but merely as an *illustration* of two things.

I.—The EXTRAORDINARY CHARACTER of man's higher sphere of being. All things here seem to be of an unique nature and order. An air of the wonderful spreads over all.

First: The *general appearances* are extraordinary. Observe the *social appearances* are extraordinary. Royalties abound. "*A throne was set in heaven,*" with one occupant supreme, as brilliant in aspect as a precious stone. "*He that sat was to look upon like a jasper (stone) and a sardine stone (sardius): and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald*" (to look upon). Then there were other royalties and dignities seated round the central throne. "*And round about the throne were four and twenty seats (thrones): and upon the seats (thrones) I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed (arrayed) in white raiment (garments); and they had on their heads crowns of gold.*" Now the social appearances of this world are nothing like this. Everywhere there is degradation, not dignity; heads encircled with poverty, sorrow, and care, not "*crowns of gold.*" Indeed the great bulk of our social world do not even see the throne of the *Supreme One*

in the heavens. They see the motion of the mere material machinery, or a scheme of what they call laws and forces, but not the one central and universal Ruler of all. Man's higher sphere of being, *socially*, is widely different to this. In the higher one free moral agents are the ruling power, not blind forces. And then over all there is One, and but One over all, on the central throne. Again, the *physical phenomena* are extraordinary. "*And out of the throne proceeded (proceed) lightnings and thunders (thunders) and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.*" True, we have lightnings and thunders here occasionally, but articulate voices in the heavens we hear not, nor do we see torches of fire blazing before the throne. The firmament that spreads over the higher sphere of being will, no doubt, in many respects, be very different to the heavens that encircle us. So, also, with the waters. "*Before the throne there was (as it were) a sea of glass (a glassy sea) like unto crystal.*" We have a sea here rolling in majesty round three parts of the globe, but it is not like glass or crystal, ever calm, sparkling, and clear, it is never at rest, often lashed into fury, and black with rage. How

calm and clear will be our higher sphere, "*a sea of glass,*" mirroring the peacefulness and the glory of the Infinite. The *living creatures* also are extraordinary. "*Round about the throne were four beasts (living creatures) full of eyes before and behind. And the first beast (creature) was like a lion, and the second beast (creature) like a calf, and the third beast (creature) had a face as (as of) a man, and the fourth beast (creature) was like a flying eagle. And the four beasts (living creatures) had each of them (having each one of them) six wings about him; and they were full (are full) of eyes within*" (and round about). Although we have on this earth such beasts and birds and faces of man as here represented, a striking difference is indicated. They had "*six wings*" and were "*full of eyes.*" Whilst some have the courage of the lion, the patience of the ox, the towering tendency of the eagle, and the sympathy of the man, they are all endowed with transcendent organs of vision and powers of speed, they teem with eyes and wings.

It is here suggested then—(I do not say that it is intended to be taught, for I am not gifted with the power to interpret such passages)—that man's life in the higher sphere of being differs

widely from the present. "Eye hath not seen," &c. Notice—

Secondly: The *supreme service* is extraordinary. What is the supreme service in that higher sphere? Worship. "*And they rest not (have no rest) day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God (the) Almighty, which was, and (which) is, and (which) is to come. And when those beasts (the living creatures) give (shall give) glory and honour and thanks to Him that sat (sitteth) on the throne (to Him) who liveth for ever and ever, the four and twenty elders fall (shall fall) down before Him that sat (sitteth) on the throne, and worship (shall worship) Him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast (shall cast) their crowns before the throne,*" &c.

The worship there is the one ruling, intense, unremitting service. It is anything but that here, business, pleasure, aggrandisement, these are the great and constant services of life. Real worship is indeed rare. The words illustrate

II.—The REAL ENTRANCE into man's higher sphere of being. "*Immediately (straightway) I was in the Spirit.*" It is suggested that this higher life, this supermundane world is entered by the Spirit. "Flesh and blood cannot enter the kingdom of heaven."

There are two ways by which man can enter the invisible.

First: By the *efforts of the imagination*. The whole scene before us is evidently the product of the imagination. Extraordinary visions men often have in the stillly watches of the night, in the season of dreams. But imagination can act more accurately, if not more vividly, in the hour of consciousness and intellectual activity. Thus Milton beheld his heavens and his hells, his angels and his devils. We can all, by the force of imagination, penetrate the visible, the material, the tangible, withdraw the sublunary curtain and step into the world of spiritual wonders. Another way which man can enter the invisible is—

Secondly: By the *influx of a new spirit*. It is not uncommon for men to come into possession of a new *ruling* spirit, and with a new spirit comes a new world. When the *philosophic* spirit enters a man (and it does so in the case of a few in every age and land) the man is ushered into a new world, a world of high thoughts, invisible forms, and remedial forces. When the *commercial* spirit enters the rustic lout he soon finds himself in a new world, a world of speculations and struggles, of losses and gains. When the *parental* spirit enters the soul it is borne into a

world before unseen, a world of solicitude, absorbing interests, pains and pleasures, sorrows and joys. When the *genuinely religious* spirit enters the soul, it enters this higher sphere of human life, the world of brightness and beauty, the world of an "innumerable company of angels, the spirits of just men made perfect," &c. "*And immediately (straightway) I was in the Spirit.*" "Heaven lies about us in our infancy," and we have only to be in this spirit to realise it. The great Teacher taught that no man can see the kingdom of God unless he comes into the possession of this Spirit. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

CONCLUSION.—Search not for an outward heaven, but rather search for that new spirit, that spirit of Christliness, that will let you into the heaven that lies about you. Were the twelve hundred million men that tenant this earth to-day to come this night into possession of this spirit, they would arise from their couch on the morrow and exclaim, "Behold a new heaven and a new earth." Evermore the state of a man's soul determines his universe. The ruling life within him measures out, builds up, and moulds the external.

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"The nominally Christian world is pervaded by a radically false and a most mischievous notion, that religion has mainly to do with the future rather than with the present; that its great object is to save us from hell and to ensure us a place in heaven when we die. It is a matter that concerns eternity rather than time, and that, therefore, can best be dealt with when we are just about to enter the eternal world. I most solemnly protest against this mischievous representation of the place of true religion in the experience of man. We need Christ as much for the present as the future, as much for the battle-field of life as for the final ordeal."—W. HAY AITKEN.

Seedlings.

Days of the Christian Year.

Luke xxi. 33.

(*Second Sunday in Advent.*)

"HEAVEN AND EARTH SHALL PASS AWAY: BUT MY WORDS SHALL NOT PASS AWAY."

THESE words of our Lord were used in reference to a prophecy which He had just delivered. But we know from other sayings of His (Matt. xxiv. 14, Mark xiv. 9) that the Saviour looked calmly and confidently forward to the future as His possession. And the language of the text strikes us, first and most of all, as bearing witness to—

I.—OUR LORD'S CONSCIOUSNESS OF HIS DIVINITY. Without such consciousness it would have been decidedly immodest and unbecoming. But though our Lord spoke much of Himself, we fail to find a single trace of egotism in His language. We are always impressed with the thought that He spoke about Himself because He knew that the whole success of His redemptive mission depended on His attracting the trust, the love, and the obedience of mankind to Himself; that, therefore, silence as to His own person and

claims, would have been treason to His cause and cruelty to mankind. Here then, as elsewhere, the consciousness of His Divine nature, of His supremacy over all material forces, breaks through, and we recognize that we stand in the presence of the Lord of nature and of men.

II.—THE FULFILMENT OF HIS PREDICTION. (1) We may truly say that these words have been already fulfilled. Taking into account the hyperbolical feature of scriptural prophecy we understand that, in many instances, heaven and earth *have passed away*. Jerusalem has perished and, with it, the Mosaic ordinances have gone. Rome itself, the great power that triumphed over Jerusalem, has passed away, with all its military and all its political forces. The mighty ecclesiastical organization that acceded to its inheritance has lost its sovereignty, &c., &c.; the "eternal city," the world empire, strongest institutions, systems that promised (or threatened) to be immovable,—these have gone, but the words of Jesus Christ remain; they remain a real, solid, living power in the

minds, in the laws, in the habits, in the life of the world. (2) We may confidently expect that they will outlive all the revolutions in government, in literature, in legislation, in theology, that will yet occur, submerging the old and establishing the new. (3) We must expect that the truth of Christ will be decisive of our future, for good or for evil, when we enter the unseen world. Soon, so far as we are concerned, the heavens and the earth will have passed away; in a few years we shall have no more interest in the scenes that are visible to our eye and the spheres that are present to our mind now. Other heavens will encircle us, on another "earth" we shall find our home. But beneath whatever skies we live, and on whatever ground we tread, the words of Jesus Christ will remain to us. By them we shall be judged and receive our portion. The recollection of them will be our brightest or our most saddening memories. The truths they contain will prove to be *universal* in the very largest sense, applicable to every region in God's wide domain, never obsolete, but for ever true and apposite in the most distant ages of the future. (a) How poor a thing to be linking our fortune to maxims which the first convulsion may expose and explode. (b) How wise to connect

our destiny with the everlasting truth which revolutions leave untouched and which time itself will prove powerless to destroy.

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John xx. 1-19.

(*Third Sunday in Advent.*)

TAKING the appearance of our Lord, as here recorded in a blossoming garden, in the early morning, we have a note of—

I.—A CHEERFUL theology. Christianity is not a midnight scare, but a morning vision. When we listen to its message, its introduction is an angel's anthem over Bethlehem. We turn not to symbolical superstitions, but to daylight and to garden. What else is the revelation Christ gives of the beauty of holiness, the love of God, the salvation and perfection of man?

II.—A SPIRITUAL theology. The risen Lord in the midst of the material creation, but not bound by its laws, not fettered by its conditions, is Himself a symbol of the life He gives to men, a life that is superior to the things that are seen and temporal. The suddenness of His appearance and transition in the garden are but hints of the liberty of

the spiritual life. Christ is to be found in every spot of earth, the glow of its beauty, the basis of its strength, for He is the WISDOM of Solomon, the WORD of John, the FULNESS of Paul. And the Christian life is free and strong like its Lord.

III.—A PRACTICAL theology. We are to have dealings with Christ everywhere. He is the Gardener of the garden, the Householder of the home, the Teacher of the school, the King of the nation. Expect to find Him anywhere; be willing to listen to Him always, and to obey Him ever. Thus will the world become as this garden of Arimathea, and all men and women, as John, Peter, and Mary were on that memorable morning, all seekers for Christ, and some finding blessed rest in Him.

EDITOR.

John xx. 19-31.

(Fourth Sunday in Advent.)

WHILST the garden, the road, the beach, the mountain were scenes of Christ's manifestation of Himself, we may not forget that the house also was; and whilst "all days" are promised as seasons of His manifestation, we may not forget that the first day of the week was specially so consecrated.

I.—THE PLACE. We do not know what house, or what room, in order that we may not limit domestic manifestations of Christ to the cottage or the mansion, the study or the room of the household. It is enough to know that there was a *voluntary gathering* of those who were bound together by a common sympathy, and a *resolute exclusion* of all that was hostile, for "the doors were shut." We might look at that assembly in the house (1) in its *historic* relationships; (2) in its *social* aspects; (3) in its *far-reaching associations*. Similarly we might regard all assemblies in homes and churches gathered in the name of Christ.

II.—THE DAY. Since this day is marked as no other is in the calendar of the New Testament, we may well give special heed to it. (1) The *history* of the first day of the week is profoundly interesting. Look at (a) Its *origin*. (b) Its *purposes*. (2) The *associations* of the first day of the week. Those mentioned in gospels, and book of the Acts, are but the earlier ones of a series that have told more mightily on the destiny of souls and on the course of human affairs than centuries of other days. "The pearl of days," "the day of days," has the first day of the week become to the human race.

EDITOR.

John i. 14.

(Christmas Day.)

"THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH."

CHRISTMAS is one of the brightest and happiest festivals of the Christian year. (Illustrate its *social* aspects and point out how these help to improve mankind.) We dwell now specially upon its *religious* aspects. We celebrate the "advent" into our world and the "taking" of our flesh by Him whom we worship as our God. The phrase, "advent of Christ," is itself suggestive. It brings before us a very *unique* fact. Untold millions have been born into our world, yet of none can we strictly say that they "took our nature," "became flesh." It suggests Christ's *antecedent* existence. (C.f. the following sentence from a thoughtful book, with not a very happy title, however, by Dr. Clemance: * "He *took* a servant's form. Only He could take it. We have no reason to think it possible for any order of created beings to exist in this twofold capacity. They cannot come into another sphere, nor stoop to a lower rank in the scale of being and combine it with their own. They could not if they would. Would they even if they could? . . . If anything were wanting to

convince us of the absolute Deity of the Son of God it would be found here—in His *taking* a servant's form.") Here then is a *strongly attested* fact and of surpassing *glory* and *influence*. Regard the incarnation of Christ as—

I.—THE CULMINATION OF A SUPERNATURAL ORDER. Gradual upgrowth the universal law of God. This is seen in the two great departments of God's work and providence: in *creation* and *history*. So the "advent" of Christ fulfils the supernatural order of (a) *Creation*. (C.f. "Deity Veiled," a very suggestive book by Rev. H. E. Von Stürmer. "Miller's Testimony of the Rocks." Newman Smythe's "Old Faiths in a New Light.") Christ is the *perfect* man (b) of *History*. Christ is the goal of all development. The yearnings of all nations answered in Him.

II.—AN APPRECIABLE MANIFESTATION OF GOD. Many ways in which God can be seen. "To see God" the deep want of mankind. God's manifestation of Himself in nature *too vast* and *too distant* to satisfy sinful, sorrowing man. We need an *attractive*, *transparent*, *perfect*, and *simple* manifestation. We have this in Christ. Here is the illustration and gift of "love." Here the

* "To the Light through the Cross."

utmost gift, for it is the gift of "self." (Illustrate points of the character of God as seen in the incarnation of Christ: *e.g.*, goodness, power, purity, &c.)

III.—AS ANSWERING ALL OUR SPIRITUAL NEEDS. (a) *Our need of an example for life.* The tendency of man everywhere to follow some pattern. A deep instinct this of our nature. The perfect model is Christ. All other religious teachers confess their own weakness. Christ challenges those who love Him and those who hate Him to find a flaw in His character. (*Cf.* Liddon's "Bampton Lectures," Lec. viii.) (b) *Our spiritual craving for quiet and rest.* Mental trials, sense of sin, guilty conscience, all met and answered in Christ. (c) *Our desire for light upon the future state.* Shall we die for ever or live? All the dim hints and guesses from other sources are gathered together, answered, and emphasized in "Christ who hath brought life and immortality to light."

IV.—ILLUSTRATES THE DIGNITY AND VALUE OF HUMAN NATURE. Shows (a) *God's interest in us.* We are dearer to Him than any other of His works. What a gift for us: His own Son. (b) *What our nature can become.* Abject as we are, and in many respects so unholy and base, yet we can rise

to pure and lofty heights. "We see Jesus," and He is the pattern for us to copy and to which we can attain. Have we accepted this great fact? Believing it, have we also the witness that Christ dwells in our hearts? Is the incarnation at Bethlehem a type of the "incarnation of Christ" within us? Our only hope and comfort is this "Christ in you the hope of glory."

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Galatians iv. 4, 5.

(First Sunday after Christmas.)

THESE words record four great facts about the first Advent of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I.—He came at the RIGHT TIME. "When the fulness of the time came God sent forth His Son,"—a word that indicates "the full measure of the time, the full tale of the seasons." The epoch in which Christ came was (1) right in relation to the plan of God. So prophecy indicates. (2) Right in relation to the state of the world. The facilities for travel and personal liberty afforded by the Roman government, the resources of the Greek language then widely in use, the decay of Judaism, the anticipa-

tions of Paganism, all mark the era as "the fulness of the times."

II.—He came as MESSENGER FROM GOD. "God sent forth from Himself His Son,"—as the full meaning of the verb teaches. Thus we are led to notice (1) The pre-existence of the Son. (2) The voluntariness of the advent of the Son. The Representative of God is not His Servant, but His Son. Hence the fulness of meaning in His statement concerning His own mission, "I am come in My Father's name." Canon Westcott strikingly says, "As Son of God He knew the Father perfectly; as Son of Man He revealed the Father perfectly. In His own Person He offered the supreme pledge of man's Divine sonship by raising his nature to heaven."

III.—He came as THE OFFSPRING OF HUMAN NATURE. He was (1) human; "born of a woman." "God manifest in the flesh." This gives to God in man's view, (a) Personality. (b) Approachability. (c) Attractiveness. (d) Imitability. (2) *Jewish*—born under the law,—obeying its requirements, fulfilling its demands.

IV.—He came as THE GREAT SPIRITUAL REDEEMER. "That

He might redeem." Bishop Lightfoot says, "The two clauses of the fifth verse correspond to those of the foregoing verse in an inverted order by the grammatical figure called chiasm; The Son of God was born a man that in Him all men might become sons of God; He was born subject to law that those subject to law might be rescued from bondage." He redeems (1) from the bondage of religious ritualism. (2) From the bondage of disobeyed and, therefore, condemning law. The legal life is exchanged for the filial life; for redemption is perfected in adoption. Potentially indeed men were sons of God before Christ's coming, but rather as heirs than as possessors of the full sense and privileges of sonship. Actually indeed they were only slaves. When they inbreathe the filial spirit, become through Christ like Him, and can put deep and tender meanings into the name, Father, as they use it about God and to God, then are they redeemed and adopted.

"Bought and adopted, and in Christ a brother,
Claimed and completed, and in Christ a man."

EDITOR.

Breviaries.

Paul's Psalm of Love. (8) The Hopefulness of Love.

"LOVE . . . HOPETH ALL THINGS."—1 Cor. xiii. 7.

THIS quality of Love follows as a consequence of much that has been previously asserted in this paragraph of St. Paul's letter, directly from the last named element,—viz., "Faith." While this hopefulness is again a source of the next quality described here, namely, endurance. I.—The hopefulness of Love is attested by the NATURE AND HISTORY OF LOVE. It is attested (1) by its *nature*. For Love will not let go any ground for expecting the best things concerning the admired, or for anticipating the best things concerning even the pitied. Unwilling to forebode ill, it is sanguine ever of good. (2) By its *history*. Love is always known to be declining when it is unhelpful. The Infinite Love is the God of Hope. II.—The hopefulness of Love GIVES LIFE AND BEAUTY TO LOVE. Whilst Love is a source of hope, hope again feeds the lamp of Love. It suggests the better explanation of what seems mysterious in human or in Divine procedure, and thus it endows Love with an eye that never grows dim. EDITOR.

Paul's Psalm of Love. (9) The Endurance of Love.

"LOVE ENDURETH ALL THINGS."—1 Cor. xiii. 7.

THOUGH not wholly dissimilar from the virtue described in the word "beareth," which suggested to us the tolerance of Love, the characteristic here asserted is not precisely the same. This indicates the force of Love to sustain quietly and to survive all persecutions and distresses inflicted by others. Indeed our word "endure" embodies the thought very completely. I.—Love HAS to endure much. This is strange, but it is true. Love is not required with Love, but often with misunderstanding and even with hatred. Error hates truth, selfishness hates Love. Christ's biography supplies the climax of the proof of this. But all loving lives witness to the same strange experience. Does not God *endure* much? II.—Love is ABLE to endure much. The distresses and persecutions that seem to have force enough in them to blast and burn out all they oppose, have been again and again as harmless to Love as the fiery furnace to the three Hebrew youths. Fierce fire cannot consume it; many waters cannot quench it. EDITOR.

Paul's Psalm of Love. (10) The Imperishableness of Love.

"LOVE NEVER FAILETH,"—1 Cor. xiii. 8.

EITHER of the two explanations of this word "faileth" that are accepted, either "falls down," or is "hissed off the stage," conveys the same impression concerning Love, namely, that it is permanent, it will never "fall down" from inanition, it will never be "hissed off" because superseded. All the beauties of Love, unlike those of face or landscape, are permanent. I.—The indispensableness of Love is indicated by ITS CAPACITY OF MEETING ALL DEMANDS MADE UPON IT. (1) *This is the conclusion from the previous assertions of this passage.* (2) *This is the result of our observation of every-day life.* True love is equal to any exigency. It survives all else. II.—The imperishableness of Love is a STRIKING CONTRAST TO ALMOST ALL ELSE IN HUMAN EXPERIENCE. (1) *This is the declaration of the passage following our text.* All else "ceases," "vanishes," is "done away." (2) *This is confirmed by human experience.* Love is the great protest of our immortality. III.—The imperishableness of Love is EXPLAINED BY ITS BEING DIVINE NOT ONLY IN ITS ORIGIN AND SUSTENANCE BUT IN ITS NATURE. Love is of God, and God's Love never faileth, "His mercy endureth for ever." Ours is not an imitation of His, but an inspiration from it. His Love is the life of ours. Hence ours is deathless. EDITOR.

Selected Acorns from a Stalwart Oak.

FREDERICK DENISON MAURICE.

“The smallest living *acorn* is fit to be the parent of *oak-trees* without end.”
—*Carlyle*.

CHRIST ALL AND IN ALL.—“All relations acquire a significance and become felt as actually living and real when contemplated in Christ; which out of Him, even to the most intensely affectionate, they cannot have. At first, each relation seems to be a step in a beautiful ladder reaching to Him, prefiguring that heavenly relation, and afterwards, if that top step be apprehended, a descending ladder set in heaven and reaching to earth.”

PERIODICAL LITERATURE.—“Have you meddled with *periodicals*, and have you thanked God that you still think, love, go to church, and find anyone to love you.”

THE KINGSHIP OF CHRIST.—“I have found myself, in all my private meditations as well as in my preaching, drawn to speak of Christ as a King, and His Church as a Kingdom; and whenever I depart from this method, I feel much less clearness and satisfaction, much less harmony between my own feelings and the Word of God.”

CHRIST AND HUMAN FELLOWSHIP.—“I was sent into the world that I might persuade men to recognise Christ as the centre of their fellowship with each other, that so they might be united in their families, their countries, and as men, not in schools and factions.”

LOVE ANTECEDENT TO KNOWLEDGE.—“I fancy I must get love first, and then, possibly, in this or in some other sphere, I may have learning added. At present I lack both.”

HISTORY AND MYSTERY.—“I have no doubt that I have helped someone to feel that there is an eternal connection between *history and mystery*; that the persons who are seeking to separate them are seeking to destroy both—the mere historian turning history into an old almanack, the mere mystics and mythics turning the invisible things, which are of all the most substantial, into an empty, gilded vapour.”

CHRISTIANITY IN ITS ESSENCE.—“If I have succeeded in fixing this thought in anyone’s heart, that Christianity as expressed in the sacraments, the written Word, and an apostolic ministry, is not a costume belonging to one age or country, but is just that which enables a man to feel and know that there is anything which is not costume, anything which is *eternal and unchangeable*, . . . it signifies not the least to me when the words which conveyed the impression are forgotten.”

BRISTOL THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE.

T. BROUGHTON KNIGHT.

Reviews.

NECESSARY TO SALVATION. By Rev. C. E. SANDERS, M.A., Vicar of Batchworth. London : Griffith and Farran.

This little book has for its key-word the answer in the Church of England Catechism about Sacraments,—“Two only, as generally *necessary to salvation*, that is to say, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord.” Throughout these Eight Lenten Sermons Mr. Sanders is aiming at proving that these Sacraments *are necessary to salvation*, finding his evidences not only in the teachings of “The Church” to which he loyally gives heed, but adducing arguments also from Holy Scripture, to which we are bound to say he seeks to be as loyal as to the Church. Our pages have never been controversial, or we might be disposed to measure a lance with the courageous and charitable, but, as we think, mistaken vicar. He certainly puts the Sacramentarian position with unmistakeable clearness and unusual force, whilst he presses home the ethics of a Christian life with vigorous persuasiveness.

VOICES FROM OLD BEVERSTON CASTLE AND RECTORY. By Rev. T. WESLEY BROWN, Author of “The Art of the Silver Tongue,” &c. Price Fourpence. W. Hatcher, Malmesbury.

A well-written little brochure consisting of two parts, a Historical Sketch of Beverston, and the Religious History of Beverston and Some Notable Rectors. There is a good deal of very interesting research, not a little indignant rebuke of the clerical intolerance and idleness, and worse, of former years, and we are on every ground glad to note a concluding tribute of honour and good will on the part of the writer, who is plainly a sturdy Nonconformist, toward the recently appointed Rector of this historic parish church.

A LAMP AND A LIGHT. By REV. F. BOURDILLON, M.A. London : Hatchards.

This is an unpretentious, albeit useful, little book. Amongst the religious topics of which it treats, are “The Twofold Light of the World—The Knowledge of the Love of Christ—The One Master and Guide—

Our Father's Knowledge and our Wants—The Prayer in the Cave—Prayer and no Prayer—Jesus the King—The Risen Life—The Warfare Within—Waiting—Fall of the Tree—Undying Worm—Unknown Time—Daniel after the Decree—Resolution acted Upon. The Heart's Reply to the Call of God—Den for the Soul—Wheat and Tares growing together—God's Delight in Mercy—Luz changed to Bethel—John's wish for Gaius—Christ taking away Sins—The Great Gain of Godliness—The Great Awakening—The Guiding Eye."

A MANUAL FOR MINISTERS AND DEACONS ; or, Practical Hints on the Constitution, Discipline, and Services of Congregational or Independent Churches. By SAMUEL MCALL, Late Principal of Hackney College. Third Edition. London : W. Mack, 28, Paternoster Row, London.

This carefully prepared manual of judicious counsel, from the pen of one who is now almost a patriarch among Congregationalists, will be read with interest and profit, not only by those for whom it is directly intended, but by many of other Communion who wish to have enlightened views of the main principles that guide the activities of so large a sisterhood of Churches as are here concerned. We have been glad that words of ours lately led a wealthy layman to give a copy of Mr. Wilson's book, on "The Life Education of the Christian Ministry," to a large number of students who had lately left College. It would be a similar gain to a large number of similar young ministers to receive from some generous hand a copy of this book.

THE RIVULET. By THOMAS LYNCH. London : J. Clarke and Co.

The attacks which were made upon Mr Lynch, by what are called the orthodox men of all churches, some twenty-five years ago, or more, have not yet faded away from our memory. We remember that the late Editor of the *Homilist* was one of the men who stood up in his defence and wrote a Homily entitled *Odium Theologicum*. The persecutor dies but the martyr lives—lives as a vital force in the hearts of men. Indeed, some of the heretic's hymns are now sung in the Churches whose ministers and deacons denounced him. Is there a hymnal in any church containing a more soul-quickenin' and up-lifting force than that beginning with "Gracious Spirit dwell with me," &c.? Through all these hymns there breathes the same spirit, and most of them possess equal devout and

poetic merit. Had the Congregational Hymn-book been entrusted to such a man as this as editor, we should not have had the necessity of three different Hymnals, with additions and sundry shameful mutilations. And so unsatisfactory is the last that another is in course of production. It is monstrous to entrust the editing of any hymn-book to a man without the highest poetic genius and Christly theology, ethics, and devotion. As three hundred hymns would be sufficient for any congregation, for one generation at least, we should recommend every minister to compile a hymn-book from the very best sources for his own congregation. The outlay would be very trifling and he could add new hymns to the book as they were required. For new hymns are as much a necessity of a living church as new blossoms of a living tree.

Publications of the Religious Tract Society, 56, Paternoster Row, London.

GIRL'S OWN ANNUAL for 1884.

BOY'S OWN ANNUAL for 1884.

EGYPTIAN LIFE AND HISTORY. By M. E. HARKNESS.

BABYLONIAN LIFE AND HISTORY. By E. WALLIS BUDGE.

PRESENT DAY TRACTS. By Various Writers.

Both the "Boy's" and the "Girl's Own Annual" are so much alike in paper, type, contents, binding, general "get up," and illustration, that much of what might be said of one would apply equally to the other. Both of them are equal to their predecessors, and this is saying a great deal. They seem to have been born in a mature state, or rather began like the first man. They are brimful not only of what cannot fail to charm the young imagination, but to interest the young intellect and to improve the young heart. Pieces of biography, interesting stories, musical compositions, numerous pictorial illustrations, and abundant recipes on almost everything domestic and medical, cannot fail to obtain for these volumes a hearty welcome into English homes.

EGYPTIAN LIFE AND HISTORY.—For many reasons the Egyptian empire is charged with mighty interests, not merely for one country and one race, but for all countries and all races. Alas, that we, who call ourselves a Christian country, should be sending out our men of battle and of blood to slaughter by tens of thousands the blood relations of Job, whose life and magnificent words constitute one of the most attractive

parts of the book we call the Bible. This history is from the earliest times, and is composed for the most part of the decipherment of the Egyptian hieroglyphics.

BABYLONIAN LIFE AND HISTORY.—“This little work,” says the author, “has been written with the view of offering to the Bible student, in a small compass, a little of the history of Babylon, her thought, religion, and manners, and, consequently, the means whereby he may understand better some of the allusions of the prophets and Bible historians.” The volume is made up of nine chapters, the subjects of which are: “Babylon according to the Cuneiform Inscriptions—Babylon according to the Classical Authors—Babylonian History from about B.C. 3800-1330—Babylonian History from B.C. 1330-668. The Fall of Nineveh. Nebuchadnezzar. B.C. 668-560—The Cuneiform Account of the Capture of Babylon by Cyrus. The causes which led to it. B.C. 560-530—Babylon under the rule of the Persians and under Seleucus. Babylonian Writing and Literature—The Babylonian Religion—Babylonian Life and Art.” It is written in a most interesting style, and will well repay a careful perusal.

PRESENT DAY TRACTS.—This volume we consider, for many reasons, one of the most useful and able of the series. It consists of six chapters, or discourses, each by a different writer. The Zend Avesta and the Religion of the Parsees, by J. Murray Mitchell, M.A., LL.D.—The Authorship of the Fourth Gospel, by F. Godet, D.D.—Present State of the Christian Argument from Prophecy, by Rev. Principal Cairns, D.D., LL.D.—The Origin of the Hebrew Religion, an Inquiry and an Argument, by Eustace Conder, M.A., D.D.—The Philosophy of Mr. Herbert Spencer examined by Rev. J. Iverach, M.A.—Man not a Machine, but a Responsible Free Agent, by Rev. C. A. Row, M.A. We recommend heartily this volume to every Biblical Student.

LITTLE TED. By REV. JENKIN JONES. London: Shaw and Co., 48, Paternoster Row.

It is refreshing to take into one's hand this little book for little children amongst the loads of sentimental rubbish which the press piles up every day for the young. It is a beautiful little tale, well conceived, and well told, with an aroma of honesty and common sense on every page. It would be well for our publishers, who supply works for children, to keep the pen of this author at constant work.

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